

THE DIAL



APRIL 1926

ON A CRUCIFIX

BY SCOFIELD THAYER

I

ROMAN FRIDAY

*Rome fut tout le monde, et tout
le monde est Rome.*

JOACHIM DU BELLAY.

O face well-pared of dross and bracken,
Concision of a flame gone stone,
The torture of that will shall slacken
Only with that tired bone.

Only when that tired skull has sunken
Shall will and flesh be Rome's,
Only when that tried flame has shrunken
Shall carcass, quiet, be Rome's.

Nor flower nor tree nor fronded bracken
Can grow upon a star,
Nor clouds can veil nor dust can blacken
The madness that You are.

O mad and sane, pared-perfect Spirit,
Illuminant of our Night! . . .
Come crucify the unclothed Spirit!
Come crucify the Light!

ON A CRUCIFIX

Rome is the world and Rome the foison
 Of all things born of death:
 O Kingly Flask! O Kingly Poison!
 Shall abrogate Rome's breath.

O face most drained of all but loving!
 O Poison of chased truth!
 O close, true flesh. O amorous gloving
 Of that emaciate ruth!

O ribs of service! Hairs of anguish!
 O ear of noble heart!
 O hard-pinned soul, not wove to languish,
 Snail-slow at dying's art.

O nose of light! O cheeks of glory!
 O lips of hopeless hope!
 O hands well-nailed! O sumptuous story
 Of bitter and intemperate scope.

I fall upon my knees and wander
 In gradual flames around your feet.
 O grow upon me that wild candour
 You flowered and flowed in Roman street!

II

IN WHICH THE WAVES OF THE SEA, BEING OF A GENTLE NATURE, INVITE OUR LORD TO FORGET BOTH HEAVEN AND EARTH.

Weep not, O comely lover,
 Nor droop your golden head;
 The waves shall give you cover
 When you are gently dead.

The waves shall beckon dearly
 When Earth's grey pastures flee,
 The waves shall trust you nearly
 When you shall trust the sea.

When those apparelled creatures
Whose wings are broken light
Shall wash your starry features
And kiss your lips good-night,

When they shall bear you gently
Among their games away—
O keep your heart intently
Where we toss back the Day!

Let not the harp or cymbal
Deprive you of our might:
Angelic feet be nimble—
But not to steal the light!

If you remembering April
Slip off your golden crown,
If you remembering April
But gently dwindle down!

Stay not among Earth's children,
Button your heart from them:
Their ways are too bewildering
For such gay stratagem.

But travel gently seaward,
Climb down the sea-pink air,
And if you keep to seaward
Our hands shall touch you there.

Our feet shall dance you gaily,
Our songs shall toss you sleep,
Our smooth white fogs shall greyly
Amend you of the Deep.

But trust us gently, Lover,
And we will love you back:
The waves shall not discover
A gentle recreant track.

ON A CRUCIFIX

And if you tire of greenness
 Go sit upon a beach,
 For there a gentle keenness
 Shall gentle happenings teach.

If there you weep and ponder
 Upon Earth's tested showers. . . .
 Accosting watery wonder
 A child shall give you flowers!

III

IN WHICH IS NOTED THAT FAMOUS AND INVINCIBLE OVERTHROW SUFFERED BY THE ARMIES OF IMPERIAL ROME, UPON THE HILL CALLED GOLGOtha, NEAR BY THE CITY CALLED JERUSALEM.

How odd that on a common hill
 Beyond a rabble town,
 That there a felon cross should spill
 The Roman Empire down.

How odd that an enduring heart
 Well-rooted in rich soil,
 How odd that such could spend a smart
 An Empire to despoil.

How odd that from a race of men
 Unversed in crowns and flowers,
 How odd that from small Mary's ken
 Should leap Ten Thousand towers.

How odd that all their flowery summits
 Attacking the gold sun,
 That with nor saws nor planes nor plummets
 One Carpenter has run.

How odd that he should grow to be
 The centuried King of Kings:
 How odd when an earth-rooted tree
 Its shadow Moonward flings!

How odd that on a certain day,
When men got up to work,
When infants turned to infant play,
When shopmen turned to smirk,

That He was nailed upon a cross,
And stood upon a hill,
That not a shopman counted loss
That evening in his till.

How odd that he who pushed a plane
And smelled of wood and nails,
How odd that thumb did give the stain
Whereat Rome's purple pales.

That he upon a well-planed cross
Which smelt of wood and nails,
That He should teach the Stars a loss
Whereat the Great Sun quails.

That he who spoke as children speak
And kept his mother's knee,
That He should make the Heavens creak,
And turn the Heavy sea.

How odd that this Maid Mary's son
Who was a simple boy,
That he should teach Great Kings to run
This Earth's unsimple toy.

That he should cancel Roman hope
And build a lordlier crown,
That he with but a heart's bare scope
Should touch an Empire down.

That He about whose gleaming feet
Our hearts in darkness cling,
That he once trod a rubbish street
Unbuttoned to the Spring!

IV

IN WHICH, THE CRUCIFIX BEING AGAIN REGARDED, OUR LORD IS AGAIN ADDRESSED AS A STAR; AND IN WHICH THE CROSS UPON WHICH HE DIED IS NOTICED FOR FIDELITY TO THOSE LAWS AND FORCES OF WHICH IT HAD BY NATURE COGNIZANCE.

O travelled heart! O travailed seeing!

O feet that cry no more!

Ah, squeezed-out Expletive of Being;
Expostulated Core.

You had no quarrel with the mountains

Nor parley with a star:

You are the hoed, spondaic mountains;
Unconjugated Star!

O hammered excellence of madness!

Cruel flower of writhen death!

O spent is all the twisted madness,
And spent the flower's breath.

Your eyelids close for a long silence;

The show is out for You.

But in men's hearts there is no silence

And seldom falls there dew.

In Galilee the fish are crying

For feet that trod on them;

And in Samaria women lying

Along Your Memory's hem.

O cross that stays dramatic heaven!

O business shortly done!

Whence will ye purchase us new leaven

When this Fare's term is run?

Ah sturdy cross! Ah faithful servant

To such power as you know.

Ah would I were as close a servant

To Him you cannot know!

TECHNIQUE

BY GEORGE SAINTSBURY

NOT long ago, in an English newspaper, the present writer saw some remarks, incidental but not uninteresting, on the ancient three-volume novel—the “Old Three-decker” of Mr Kipling’s not least charming poem. Two reasons were, I think, alleged for its unsuitableness to present days. One was that the twentieth century had not time to read it—a common but mistaken view as far as the novel, if not the century, is concerned. The average three-volume novel was by no means so long as it looked. The volumes were not very thick, and the binding was substantial for circulating library use; the print was large and largely spaced and margined. You could, in reviewing such things, not by mere “dipping and skipping” but by honest if skilled reading, despatch a couple of novels between dinner and bedtime without dining very early, or outwatching any Bear of decent and domestic habits. But if I remember rightly, the journalist in question rather preferred his second reason—that our recent advance in the technique of novel-writing made the three-decker inconvenient and obsolete. Of that beloved old craft—for even after having to do with some hundreds of specimens of her and discharging broadsides into not a few of them, the memory of the whole fleet is kindly—it will not be necessary to say much more now, though we may return to her towards the end of this article. It is on the question of the “advance in technique” alleged, and of the character and value of technique itself in the arts generally, in literature especially, and in prose fiction most of all, that the spirit has moved me to say a few words. The subject ought not to lack interest in America for the first writer on it who occurs to me is my old acquaintance: the late Mr Henry James, and the next the (I hope) living Mrs Edith Wharton. Not that I propose, directly or even indirectly, to support or attack the notions of either, but their names which of course might be largely reinforced, are enough to shew that Columbia has not been indifferent to the matter.

Now even to hint or hesitate doubt, dislike, or distrust of such a thing or such a word as technique may seem to argue either mere

stupidity or idle paradox. What is just a little more, it would also argue—in the case of a critic who for more than half a century has done his little best to accentuate the importance of treatment over that of mere subject—something like impertinent inconsistency. You look at your Greek Dictionary and you find (supposing that you did not know it before) that *techne* means “the way or means by which a thing is gained or done”: and as all arts, coarse and fine, are concerned with the gaining or doing of things, art is a good way of translating *techne* into English. And all the arts, from cookery to architecture and from poetry to schoolbook-writing, require a large collection of detailed ways and means to produce and warrant their results—details of material, details of procedure, details of object, et cetera. Now the mass of these ways and means may be justly called “technique,” and be separated, if you like, into selection of object, process, and material respectively. In point of process perhaps the arts of design require most elaborate technique: and accordingly there has always been more dispute about this with them than with others. As to music I shall say nothing because I have no technical knowledge myself. I merely judge it by the gross results on my ear which is tolerably catholic, but quite uneducated. It is of the technique of literature alone that I can undertake to speak with some *expertise*, if not of production, of valuation and judgement; so to literature let us come.

Even in this one art—if you can call it one where the diversity in its unity is so great—the importance of technique varies greatly in different departments. In poetry it is of course, if not of greater, of more obvious importance than in prose: for even “free” verse is by no means free from a prosody of its own, and prose, metrical verse, and free verse alike have, at their peril, to obey or rebel against certain as yet very imperfectly discovered and perhaps never quite exhaustively discoverable laws of rhythm. Independently of this, which we may call the arrangement of words, there is the selection of the words themselves; and independently again of the form altogether there is infinite possibility for technique in selection and treatment of subject.

Now let us go back, for a moment, to our Greek Dictionary. We shall find there a subsidiary definition of *techne* “A set of rules: a system or method of making or doing a thing.” Now, beyond all doubt, this was the special meaning of the word, or rather of its

derivative "technique," of which our anonymous authority was thinking when he said that advance in it was adverse to the existence or revival of the Old Three-decker.

Please observe that in assuming an attitude of at least dubiety in respect of the value of such technique, I am not at the moment intending to attack any set of rules, any system, in particular. My scepticism is of a much wider and deeper kind. It extends to questioning the value of, and to denying the advance attainable by, such "systems" in literature generally; and in novel-writing more than in any other department. Of course this is heresy: and save at very few periods (when even at these it was rather triumphantly heretical than orthodox) it always has been heresy. Mankind has always hankered after prescription, positive and negative: and has perhaps scarcely ever shewn its hankering more than in times and at occasions of apparent rebellion and revolution. Adam and Eve were to eat the apple not because it was nice but because it was to give them instantaneous and extensive education in good and evil; murder, robbery, et cetera, are justifiable and justified to-day because "class-war" is such an excellent theory. Now every kind of technique is a collection of prescriptions negative and prescriptions positive, resting more or less on theory. Sometimes they are absurd in the unconscious infantile manner, as when the excellent Alison pointed out that every principle of taste forbade the depicting of a Bandit with a Grecian nose; sometimes they are, if not ridiculous, purely arbitrary as when the Right Honourable John Wilson Croker laid it down that every couplet of heroic verse must contain a completed sense, if not exactly a completed sentence. Often they are not at all absurd in themselves: but they are rarely free from more or less arbitrariness. Even when at their very best—that is to say when they are intelligent and obedient generalizations from the best works of the past—they risk, if they do not positively deny, the two greatest properties (for these are something more than mere *qualities*) of Art—its Infiniteness and its Individuality. In mere mechanism you *must* have technique; you may, in the beginning of things have to learn it by practice but if you neglect it or are rash in experimenting for it, you will have various unpleasant results, from pinching your fingers to exploding something and destroying half a city. In Science as that word is commonly understood, you

need a good deal of it. But in Art, after the merest preliminaries; —colour-mixing, perspective, construction of musical instruments, voice-production, grammar, prosody, et cetera—technique will be of little use to you and of no little danger. “Save your own soul you have no star”; and if you are starless in that respect, the most cunningly and correctly built craft will only carry you at your peril.

Now whether novel-writing be, as some have claimed for it since its coming of age, after being long in embryo and not a very short time in nonage, comparatively recently the—or at least a—supreme form of literary art, there is neither room nor need to discuss here. But there are certain points about it which make it the most closely human of the divisions of the most essentially human of arts—literature. It may not command the heights and depths as Poetry does, or sway the multitude as is done by Drama. But then Poetry borrows a good deal, while making this its own as it borrows, from Music; and Drama from the arts of colour, design, and action; the novelist grips (if he does grip) his reader without the aid of any such accessories. He at once represents and appeals to that infinity and individuality of passion, manners, thought, and in short life which characterizes and constitutes humanity and which characterizes and constitutes Art.

It will surely follow from this that Technique, except of the most rudimentary kind—technique equally necessary to novels whether they be in twenty volumes or in three or in one—is rather unnecessary to them, and may be rather more than dangerous. A curious example of this strikes me as I write. Perhaps there is no technical warning of modern times which has received, nay deserved, more praise (for its neglect has often brought disaster) than Matthew Arnold's famous one in the Preface to his Poems as to the danger of situations in which “suffering finds no vent in action,” in which “everything is to be endured, nothing to be done,” et cetera. Whether the critic-artist's own Empedocles which he condemned on this score, deserved the condemnation does not here matter in the least; it is enough that the caution or rule seems eminently reasonable and that it has sometimes justified itself. But—and this is the important point—at the very moment when it was written there had been written, and not long after it was published there was published, one of the most remarkable novels

if not of the very highest class only a little below that—Fromentin's Dominique: which its warmest admirer would find it very difficult to free wholly from the operation of Matthew's rule. The rule operates but the result escapes.

Nor in this case can that most misunderstood of all sayings, "the exception proves the rule," be urged with its usual misunderstanding. The rule fails, not because of the exception in this case or in any case: but because it is a rule and the kind admits none. I believe it is hardly an exaggeration to say that there is not a great novel in the world in which a sufficiently acute and practised critic could not detect a breach—nay a number of breaches—of technical rules by no means of the ridiculous or the excessively arbitrary type. "Women are rum creeturs" though Mr Snodgrass did so indignantly deny it (I fancy Emily Wardle taught him better later). Men are creeturs perhaps less obviously but not much less decidedly rum: and the novel which should deal with both, including of course their circumstances and experiences, their wills and ways—is a rum creetur too. Now technique presupposes that its creeturs will not be too rum; that they will be at any rate orderly and obedient in their rumness; that even if they go in for complexes and inhibitions these can be in a manner foreseen and provided against. They cannot.

That is to say, of course, they can: but you will do it at the expense of taking the life out of them. Nay more; you can, if you possess certain powers not wholly of the right kind, educate and breed up a public which will enjoy or think it enjoys your technical or Frankenstein-made creations. But theirs is a diseased appetite: and you are pandering to it. No one of the very great novels of the world (as has been said already) subjects itself to any technique; the exception which used to be made in the case of Tom Jones has been impartially disproved by objectors who had no idea at all of attacking technique in itself. Perhaps the greatest and surest rule of apparent technique ever formulated at any time is the old Aristotelian doctrine of the superiority of plausible-probable impossibilities, over possibilities not rendered plausible or probable. Yet if you consider this you will see that it annihilates technique altogether. The next greatest text, with a huge expanse of time between but so close in sense as to be almost identical is Coleridge's "suspension of disbelief." Sovereign of course. But *how* you are

to suspend disbelief? *how* you are to make impossibilities plausible? "God bless us all, that's quite another thing." I have read as much criticism, technical and other, as most of my fellow creatures I believe. I haven't found many effectual receipts or directions for the production of these little morphological changes.

A friend of mine once received one of those curious uncomplimentary compliments which are perhaps the sincerest, from somebody who said to him, "You have a wonderful way of telling a story. I don't mean as a novelist would tell it."

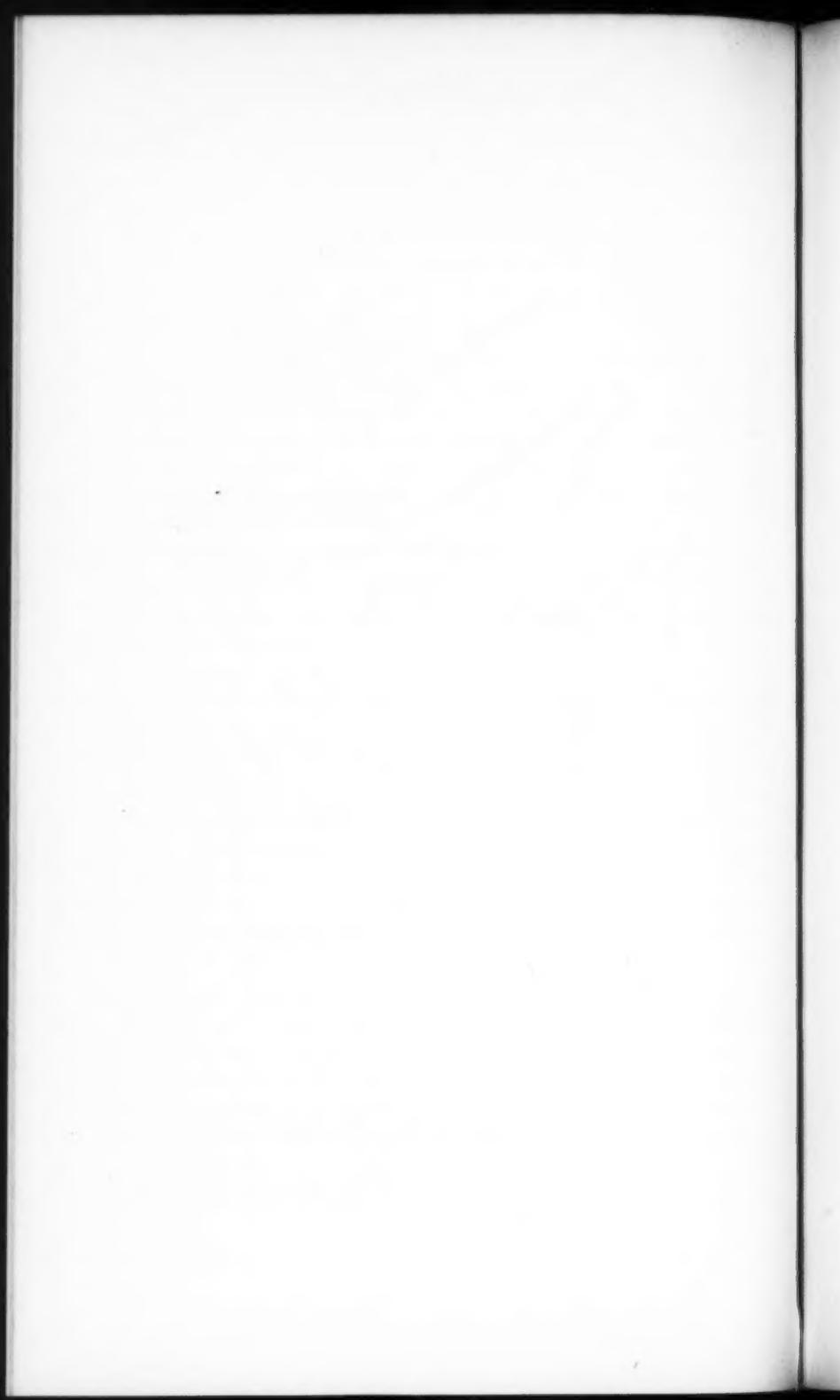
Now the novelist must of course have the gift of telling a story *as* a novelist tells it and there certainly is a difference. I once heard a novelist (and one of no mean class too) tell a story just as it had occurred to him, walking up and down the room and gesticulating the while. He printed it afterwards: but it was by no means the same thing. "Ah!" you say, "the technique came in after all." Possibly; but it was not the technique we have been talking of, the technique of rule and scheme—of sidemarked analysis of motive and the like.

The only real prescription that I know of—after critically reading thousands of novels and reading for pleasure at least scores of them over and over again—is something like the famous one of an older art, perhaps the oldest of all, Cookery. "First catch your story (whether by head or tail does not much matter). Then catch characters which will enable it to work out. Catch words to put in their mouths, that will in the best sense 'accompany' the action. Catch description et cetera to garnish with at pleasure." But exactly how you are to do the catching no one can tell you to any good purpose, and the people who pretend to tell you will probably tell you, if not to bad purpose, to bad result. Practice may help to make you perfect: but by no means certainly. There are more "single-speech"—at least "single-success"—novelists, from the author of *Manon Lescaut* downwards, than there are single-success artificers in any other craft. To put the conclusion of the whole matter you will write good novels if you are a good novelist: but exactly *how* you become a good novelist and *how* you write good novels probably you do not yourself know, certainly no other human being can tell you.



Courtesy of the Flechtheim Gallery, Berlin

PORTRAIT OF THE ARTIST. BY RENEE SINTENIS



TWO POEMS

BY GEORGE H. DILLON

I

BIOGRAPHY

The silver stars, the golden sun
Are strangers to this alien one.

He would converse with them, but he
Is silenced by their secrecy.

To sorrow he will come, I fear,
Not having learned the language here.

He hails from the unhearing ground
And will not be beguiled by sound.

The noiseless tumult of the spring
Invades him. Therefore he must sing.

His sudden heart is nearly broken
With strange words urgent to be spoken.

He seeks a peace he will not find
Save in the land he left behind,
This homesick vagabond from dust.

At last, I think, his lonely lust
With earth's undreaming lust is one,
And he forgets the golden sun.

And still the sun bestows the day.
And the stars keep their voiceless way.

II

SERENADE

Your pallor is no rose that blooms
And no white bird with glassy plumes.

More pale than pear trees blowing white
Your body trembles on the night.

The music of your motion is
Least dubious of mysteries
For so I sense you from afar.

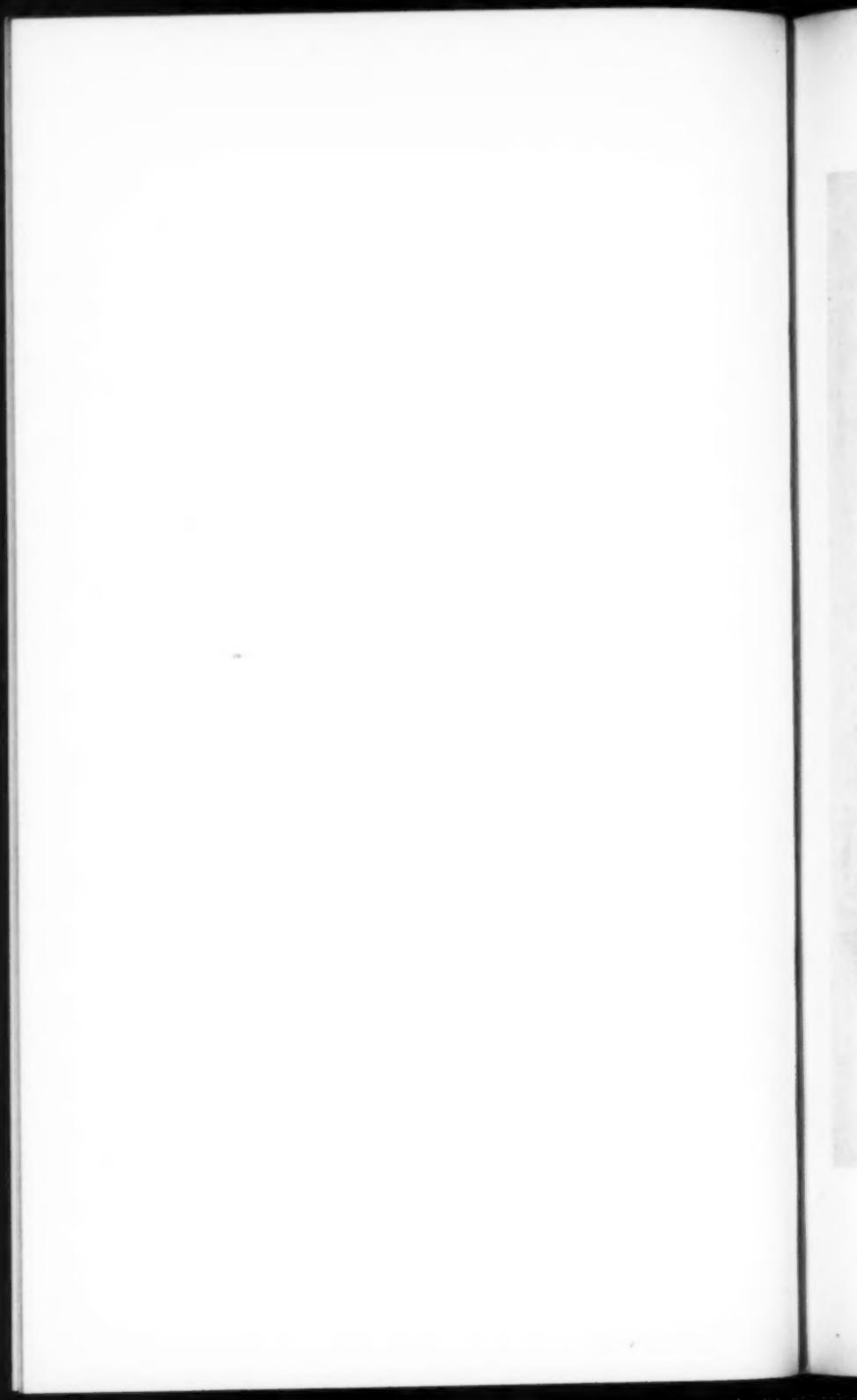
Like bird and bloom and song you are.

These things I loved, but they are lost.
The bird is broken on the gust.
The bloom is given to the dust.

A song is never always new
And is forgot. And you, and you . . .



LE LAVOIR A CASTEL GANDOLFO. BY ANDRE DERAIN





LE LAVOIR A CASTEL GANDOLFO. BY ANDRE DERAIN

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THE YAQUI

BY MARGARET ADELAIDE WILSON

NO ONE knew Mr and Mrs Robbins intimately. They were comparative newcomers in the valley and kept much to themselves, farming their five-acre apricot orchard with the help of a fat black pony. When the fruit season was on and the ranchers had to wait in line before the scales of the co-operative cannery, Mrs Robbins and the single wagon were always somewhere in the queue. Generally she was alone on the high seat, but on cooler days her husband sometimes came with her, his milky purblind eyes roving wistfully in search of some object distinct enough to fix his attention.

It was old Robbins' blindness, Johnny Carr contended, that had made it possible for Mrs Robbins to catch him, yet when one looked at that impassive woman one could not imagine her trying to capture any man. She must have been thirty years younger than her husband, but one did not associate her with youth. Her smooth round face and slanting eyes gave her the look of a contemplative Buddha, and her immaculate grey gingham outlined massive shoulders and massive knees. Only her hands had feminine grace. Plump and tapering, with almond-shaped nails that had resisted the effect of hard work and exposure, they looked singularly out of place clinging to the shabby reins of the old harness.

The Robbins' place in the queue of waiting ranchers was marked by constant and uneasy motion. The black pony had a dash of bronco in him, and when he wasn't trying to back into the load behind him or cramping the wheels in an attempt to squirm out of line, he would be pushing the shafts into the boxes ahead, in an effort to snatch a mouthful of fruit. Mrs Robbins seemed undisturbed by his antics. It was the unfortunate ranchers who suffered, and the pony soon became hated by all who had had a taste of his meanness.

"Why don't the woman show some spine about that horse?" Johnny Carr demanded indignantly, as he picked up two shattered

boxes of fruit which the Robbins' pony had shoved off the back of his wagon. "Sitting there like a Chinese idol letting him raise Ned! She don't act bright."

"Women mostly don't act bright about horses," remarked his hearer indulgently. "Look at her now, snakin' up to the scales out of her turn. If she don't look out someone's going to object."

He had scarcely spoken before someone did object. Mrs Robbins was just slipping on the vacant scales when there was an angry shout from a youth with a Ford truck whose turn she had taken.

"Hey, wait!" he shouted, cranking his Ford furiously. Mrs Robbins glanced back at him but made no move to get off the scales. Instead she tapped her whip for the doorman and when he had swung off her ten boxes and handed her the weights, she picked up her reins and turned back down the line, the red and white cotton umbrella wobbling above her, her broad hat blowing rakishly back from her forehead.

"Some crust, I'll tell the world," growled the youth with the Ford.

"Ought to have kept your motor running, son," Johnny Carr grinned. "She's unloaded and gone while you were starting up."

"But it wasn't her turn," insisted the boy. "If old Robbins is on the wagon to-morrow I'm going to speak to him about it. I sure am."

But old Robbins was not on the wagon the next day or the next, and once again after friendly hands had extricated the pony from a tangle of his own making, Mrs Robbins took advantage of the clear space ahead to drive up and squeeze in just back of the scales.

I had noticed the heads of Johnny Carr's bays tossing behind my trailer, and leaning out to say what I thought of this fresh outrage I saw that a strange Indian was driving Johnny's wagon. He was a lithe, coppery young fellow with the straight bang of old Mexico across his forehead. His brilliant eyes met mine with friendly interest, then he glanced beyond me to Mrs Robbins. She had unloaded and was trying to drive away, but seemed to be hopelessly blocked in the press about the cannery door.

Ordinarily the men would have made way for her, but she had

evidently strained the courtesy of the tired ranchers to the breaking point and they were letting her extricate herself as best she might.

The pony pushed and bit his way through till he came to Olaf Hansen's greys. Whether by chance or by intention one could not tell, but at that moment the greys swerved out of line just enough to block his path. He squealed and bit at the greys, and the greys retaliated. Mrs Robbins' face lost its oriental calm and her slanting eyes took on a beady look. She jerked spasmodically at the reins as the pony reared and threatened to come back on the wagon.

Someone flashed by me. It was the Indian from Johnny Carr's wagon; he ran as if on feathered feet, plunged through a narrow opening, and caught the bridle of the black pony.

That slim brown hand must have held some strange authority, for the little brute came down on all fours and stood trembling. The Indian gave his ears a light caress, then turned with an imperious gesture and waved Olaf Hansen back into line. Olaf obeyed, his small blue eyes bewildered. The Indian led the pony down the narrow lane while Mrs Robbins sat with limp reins. She scarcely glanced at the slender figure by the horse's head, seeming to receive his help as hers by right. There was no hint of feminine coyness in her assumption; it went deeper than any claim of sex. Yet as the man strode past my car with that deerlike step I saw that his brilliant eyes were on Mrs Robbins' face and I could hear him murmuring a single word in English, as if it were a charm. The word was "pretty." "Pretty, pretty, pretty," he said in his liquid melancholy voice, "Pretty, pretty, pretty."

By Johnny Carr's wagon he dropped the bridle and Mrs Robbins drove off. A veil fell over those shining eyes when the trees finally hid her from sight. The Indian slipped up to the bay colts and rubbed his cheek against their soft noses and gazed into their eyes. Then he stood, one hand upon his hip, waiting for the line to move up.

"He's a Yaqui from across the border," Johnny Carr explained when I questioned him next day about the Indian. "Only knows a dozen words of English, but work! Tireless as a watch-spring. Good with horses, too. Only man on the place I allow to handle my bays."

I related the episode of Mrs Robbins' rescue. "No!" said Johnny. "Mrs Robbins! I never thought of Agostino as a ladies' man. He doesn't look at any of those pretty Chemehuevi girls in the pitting-shed, though Lord knows they smile at him enough."

A few minutes before when a group of Indian girls strolled past, I'd had a chance to observe this indifference on the part of the Yaqui toward the women of his own race. Yet as the days went by he developed toward the rest of us, men and women alike, an engaging friendliness. He was quick to help with a tottering load, a restive horse, a car whose starter had gone dead. Sometimes a smile flashed with childlike abandon over his dark face, dissipating for the moment its look of veiled melancholy.

Only when Mrs Robbins appeared, however, did he become a vivid, brilliant creature; and men with time hanging heavy on their hands amused themselves by speculating on the secret of her attraction for him.

"About as lively as a bolster and no prettier," observed one with a touch of exasperation. "It sure is queer."

"Yah, let old Robbins catch him looking at Mrs Robbins," Olaf Hansen snarled, then grinned sourly at his own absurdity. Robbins, half blind and wholly discouraged, was no more to be feared than a rabbit. Hansen's little eyes travelled furtively to Mrs Robbins and I fancied him discomfited because he could catch no hint of consciousness in her face. I thought I understood what was working in him. He remembered how the Yaqui had brushed him out of the way of Mrs Robbins' horse, and in his stolid mind resentment was smouldering.

Yet there was trouble too in his face as he watched the Yaqui. Something in the man's dark, alien grace disturbed him, and his gaze brooded upon the Indian till the sound of a truck getting under way recalled him to the fact that the scales were empty.

"Get a move on!" he shouted to the Yaqui and clicked to his own team. The Yaqui did not move and Hansen saw, as we all did, that again Mrs Robbins was driving up to the vacant scales.

As one looks back to what happened next one thinks of it as an illusion in brains made delirious by the morning's heat. We saw Hansen jerk his team out across Mrs Robbins' path, heard his angry roar of "No, you don't!" There was a squeal, the sound of kicking, of splintering wood, in clouds of dust. Men jumped

from their cars and ran, but the Yaqui was ahead of them. Like light he had reached Hansen and was dragging him to the ground. A knife gleamed in the sun, and Hansen would have spoken no more if the pony in his lunging had not struck the Yaqui's uplifted arm. The knife clattered from his fingers, pinning a bit of Hansen's skin to the ground. The Indian dropped across his intended victim and lay still.

I remember glancing at Mrs Robbins in the uproar and wondering what emotion it was that made of her face a grinning mask. She kept jerking the reins, her eyes on the figure stretched across the burly and groaning Hansen.

Then everyone suddenly waked up and as the Yaqui showed signs of returning consciousness, he was caught by half a dozen strong hands and pulled to his feet. He paid no attention to pushings and shovings, but looked in a daze at the woman on the wagon; and having read no orders there suddenly became docile and walked away between his captors.

"Gentle as a child," said one of the men afterwards. "Come to think of it, he didn't show up so bad, that Yaqui. He was trying to defend a woman, you know."

But there was no getting around the fact that the Yaqui had attempted assault with a deadly weapon, and Olaf Hansen was not going to let him off. Johnny Carr came to the help of his man and engaged a lawyer at the county seat to defend him.

"Finest workman I ever had on the place, and the bays dote on him," said soft-hearted Johnny. "Can't be really dangerous when he's so kind to horses."

"I'm afraid that won't weigh much with the modern jury," my father retorted drily. "Remember that this is an age of automobiles, my friend."

No one knew how Mrs Robbins felt about being summoned as a witness. I am glad to say, however, that without meaning to she gave Hansen a bad half hour. She told in her impassive voice how long she had been waiting in the fruit line and how anxious she had been. "Mr Robbins has dizzy spells and I don't like for him to be alone long," she explained. "I can only haul a few boxes at a time, the horse being so small, and it don't take but a minute to unload them, so I slip in anywhere I see a chance. It ain't as if I hindered anybody else by going ahead of my turn."

Hansen reddened and began to squirm, but Mrs Robbins was not looking at him.

"This Indian here," she went on, "he looked back at me when the truck got off the scales, and I thought he meant me to come on. I was just driving up when Mr Hansen's team turned out square in front of me. It almost turned my wagon over and this Indian —well, I guess others can tell what happened better than I can. I was too busy minding my horse."

That was the affair as Mrs Robbins saw it; and while she told her story the prisoner sat with his arm in a sling, his brilliant eyes brooding on her face, the picture of wild beauty caught. One felt the dusty courtroom alive and magical, just to see him there.

"Pretty, pretty, pretty," he murmured as Mrs Robbins sat down. I followed his glance, suddenly afire to know what it was that charmed him; and then I thought I saw. When Mrs Robbins sat down it was to a repose that was like nothing in our life. She somehow suggested dusky pagodas, with those slanting, downward-looking eyes, those massive knees, that smooth round chin. The Yaqui, a child of fire and passion, perhaps saw dimly here a better way, the way of passionless repose. He worshipped as at the shrine of one of those elder goddesses known by his people in Asia before a chance storm had swept them away to this crude new world.

Mr Robbins was called, and as Mrs Robbins helped him to his feet the prisoner made a sharp movement.

"*Quién?*" he asked aloud of Johnny Carr, and Johnny looking at him in mild surprise answered in Spanish, "Her husband."

A cry rang out such as I suppose that room had never heard before. Inarticulate, yes, if you analyse it by the symbols we have devised to cloak emotion. But every man in that room felt a clapping-to of his heart at the cry, and in the after silence every man looked away from his neighbour as if fearful of reading his naked heart.

Mr and Mrs Robbins alone stood unmoved, Mr Robbins staring with his pale eyes to find the source of the interruption, Mrs Robbins pushing his cane into his hand, dusting the sleeve of his alpaca coat.

"Well, did ye want to ask me something?" said Mr Robbins querulously. He tapped his cane, but no one heeded. The

lawyers bent to confer with Hansen and then in most irregular fashion the court announced that the charge was to be changed to one of simple assault. The prisoner was fined twenty-five dollars and allowed to go.

Johnny Carr paid the fine and put his hand on the Yaqui's shoulder.

"All right, Agostino," he said kindly. "You're free, but I'm going to keep your knife for you."

The Yaqui turned like a man struggling out of a dream. The black bang on his brow was damp with sweat and his eyes were strained. "*Mañana, patrón,*" he said clinging to the knife.

"Look here," said Johnny, "don't touch Hansen. I stand instead of you, *amigo*, and if you hurt Hansen they blame me. *Sabe?*"

The Yaqui looked at him. "Si," he muttered with a weary gesture. "Hansen no me importa nada—no matter now."

Outside the courthouse people were getting into their cars and they eyed the Yaqui curiously as he went to the single wagon where Mrs Robbins was helping her husband to the seat. He watched motionless until with a first sign of disturbance Mrs Robbins scowled at him. He slipped up to the fat pony and laid his cheek against that wilful cheek, then looked once more at the woman on the seat and we who were near heard that liquid plaint of "pretty, pretty, pretty."

"Get ap!" said Mrs Robbins and jerked the reins. The pony moved away by angry jumps and the Yaqui stood alone, bare-headed in the sun. The dusty road was back of him, running straight and white to the shouldering ranges; a sharp primitive landscape of violent colours and brooding shadows.

It was barely light next morning when Johnny Carr drove into our place and called my father, who had just come home from a night's vigil beside a sick baby and was making himself coffee in the kitchen.

"Want you at the Robbins place," I heard him say. "My Yaqui—" he lowered his voice so that I heard no more, and before I could dress and come down, my father had jumped in with Johnny Carr and they were gone.

I conjured up terrible pictures of a savage run *amok* and killing right and left; and dressing hurriedly I took our own car and followed to the Robbins ranch.

The Robbins place was a flat bit a mile from the village, with a shabby portable house guiltless of vines or flowers, set in a sandy corner near the road. There were two or three cars drawn up by the road-side and a group of ranchers stood by the steps, my father with his surgeon's bag among them. No one seemed to be doing anything. Mr Robbins sat on the steps, peering about him like a bewildered mole. Mrs Robbins stood beside him, and as I came near I saw a figure on the sand. It was the Yaqui, and in his heart was the knife that had been the chief witness against him the day before.

Mrs Robbins looked at me, and as if another woman's presence had power to loose her tongue, she broke into slow speech.

"He'd taken some notion about me," she offered, her tapering fingers at her throat. "I hardly noticed till yesterday. . . . This morning just as it was light I saw his face at the window. I guess I screamed . . . the next moment it was gone. I heard a fall and a kind of sigh, and after a little I came out . . . and he was there."

She looked down at the dead man, then back at her husband, and those deep-set slanting eyes suddenly darkened with a strange gust of trouble. She threw her apron over her head and went swiftly into the house.

"Enough to upset anybody," murmured Johnny Carr. "I spose we'd better not touch the body till the coroner comes, eh, Doc?"

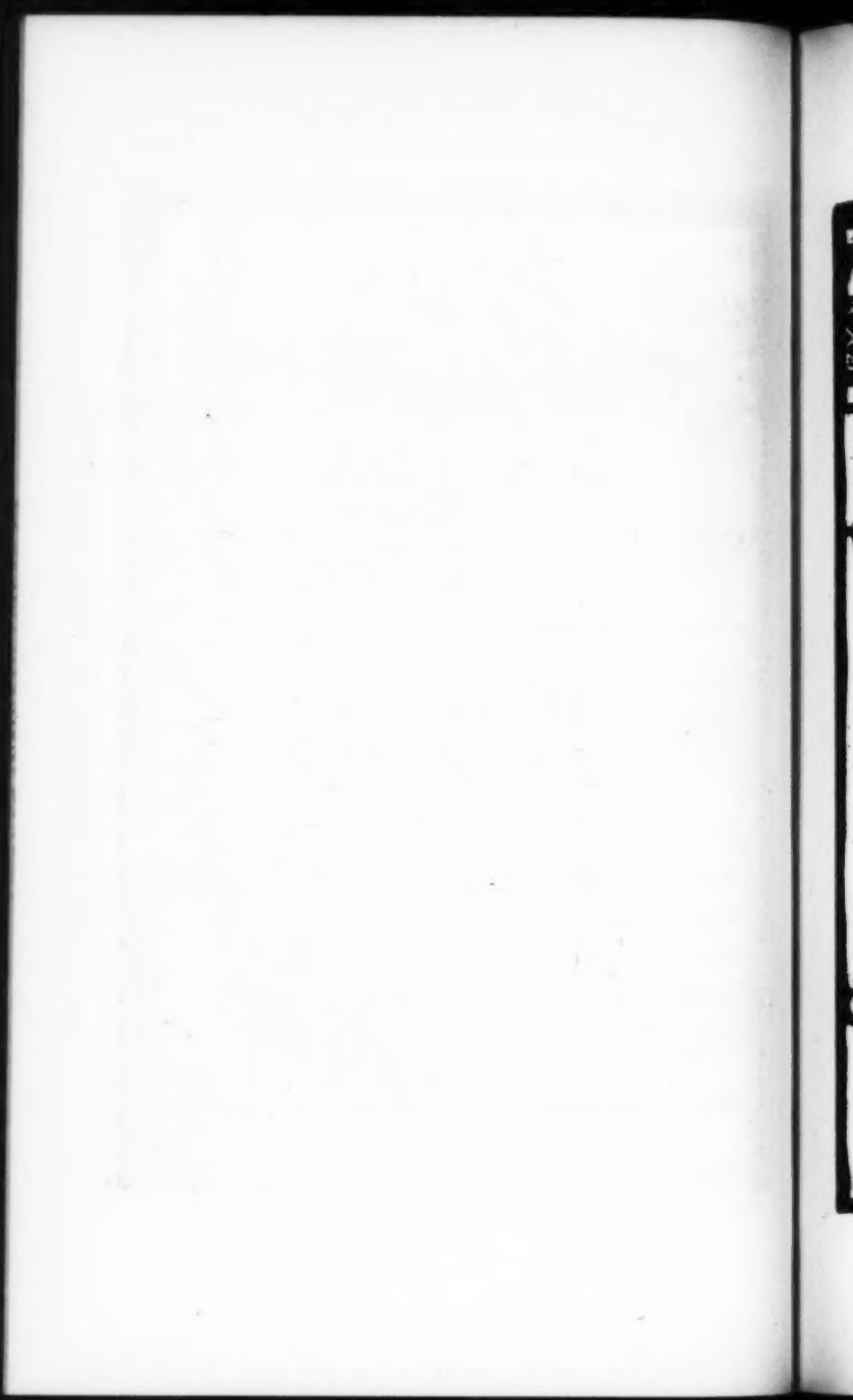
"He'll be here in a few minutes now," said my father.

I looked again at the figure on the ground. He was more beautiful than dreams, the pallor of death touching the fine-drawn cheek, the faintly smiling lips. The living men about him seemed rough and ill-formed in comparison yet it was as if each had caught dignity from the dead.

"Queer!" muttered Olaf Hansen, looking and turning away, then turning reluctantly to look again at the mystery before him.



GROUP OF MEXICAN BOYS. BY HENRY J. GLINTENKAMP



PEONS WASHING FEET AT FOUNTAIN. BY HENRY J. GLINTENKAMP



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LAST PAGES

BY ANATOLE FRANCE

With Annotations by Michel Corday

Translated From the French by J. Lewis May

IV

In *The White Stone* which was published in 1907, "It will not be given to us, even to the youngest of us," wrote Anatole France, "to see the close of the era of arms." In the same book occur singularly prophetic statements concerning the character of the coming conflicts.

Industrial violence breeds military violence. . . . Trade rivalries kindle international hatreds that can be quenched only in blood. Like the feudal state, the capitalist state is a war-like state. Under the existing régime of nationalist production it is the guns that fix tariffs, set up customs-barriers, open and close markets. A war of extermination is inevitably fomented by the economic conditions which control the civilized world to-day.

There must be created for the people, and by the people, a mutual love of country. Let us preserve, respect, and uphold those national organizations which, in the present stage of human evolution, are the necessary forms of social life. Let us remember that the disintegration of the free peoples, the downfall of the intellectual nations would, far from paving the way for the union of free nations, swiftly subject the Latin races of Europe to the domination of a barbarian autocracy. The free nations must enter, not dead, but living, into the world-wide Federation. When that day dawns, may it shine upon a France that has lost neither her name, nor the memory of her glorious past; neither her power, nor her genius. May it behold her standing firm, her brow encircled with the crown of olive, proud of being a good worker, striving not to be outstripped by any of her sisters in the ascent to the shining peaks of Concord and Peace.

Dete~~st~~ting war, Anatole France shared with Alfred de Vigny a concept of the army as a chosen body of devoted souls, isolated from their fellows, "a monastery on the march," and in paying tribute to Colonel Picquart, he compared him with

one of those soldiers whom Alfred de Vigny had seen or imagined, calm heroes of the daily round, who invest the performance of the humblest duties with the nobility that is within them, for whom the fulfilment of routine tasks constitutes the poetry of everyday life.

Imbued as he was with the Latin spirit, he admired Rome and all things Roman, especially the Roman concept of peace with victory; and was fond of repeating the formula imposed finally upon the entire world: "They desired that their vanquished foes should become their friends." In a statement made to the newspapers, during the first months of the war, he paraphrased it as follows:

Our victory shall not be stained with crime. . . . We proclaim that the French people will admit the vanquished foe to their friendship.

Although seventy years of age, he offered himself for military service. Yet truly a pacifist, he cherished the hope and expectation of the coming of universal peace.

In a word, every nation, white or yellow, deems itself the greatest in the world. Every nation has a taste for war and delights in carnage. When the carnage is organized, it is called war and is held to be the finest, the noblest, and the most profitable occupation in the world.

But are we therefore to say that it will always be thus, and that universal peace will never come to pass? Since its remote beginnings, humanity has passed through many phases; surely this present phase, in which one power is set up against another, cannot endure for ever. And we may entertain the hope that, following the successive associations which welded together the family, the tribe, the nation, mankind will at length be joined together in a United States of the World. In some distant future, America or Japan will decide that matter, if, as Monsieur Couchoud gives us to understand, the world must some day be either American or Japanese.

Meanwhile let us make the coming of Peace the great desire of

our hearts. Let us desire it, because desire is creative force, the sole creative force whose power is felt throughout the universe. Let us write and write again the name of Peace, for after all, those early Scandinavians who believed in the virtue of runes, had a vague instinct of the power of ideas; a word traced on a wind-tossed leaf may change the fate of the world.

The following words are taken from an address to the Congress of Teachers assembled at Tours in August 1919:

In moulding the child, you are shaping the edifice of the future. What a task it is, at this crisis of our history, when the world is crumbling in pieces about us, when old social structures are collapsing beneath the weight of their own misdeeds, and when victors and vanquished are sinking side by side into a common slough of misery, gazing at each other with looks of mutual abhorrence.

It is the teacher's duty to imbue the child with a love of peace and the works of peace. He must instil hatred of war, and banish from the pupil's tasks everything which could excite hatred of the foreigner, hatred even of the foes of yesterday; not that we must show indulgence to crime and absolve all those who are guilty, but because in every nation the victims of wrongdoing far exceed in number the actual perpetrators of disaster. My friends, see to it that hate is hated.

In 1923 he addressed as follows American women who came "to take part in the restoration of our war-stricken provinces":

Mesdames, I am given to understand that you will not disdain the greeting of an old man who, after having espoused all the political errors of his time, has come, at the close of his days, to see that truth resides in government by the people, for the people.

You come from a country that is both industrious and rich, to a land oppressed by a glory fraught with disaster, a land which suffers from that burden more cruelly than its pride will suffer it to avow.

You are greatly welcome. Repairing the ravages of war is, however, not our only task. You are women, and women are more courageous than men. Be the saviours of humanity.

Be it your task to attack the monster that devours mankind—to make war on war, war to the death.

From this time forward, hate war with quenchless hatred.

Hate it as you contemplate its wrongs; hate it when you see it adorned with the splendours of triumph, with the palms of victory.

Let your hatred of it be a mortal hatred. Slay it!

Women! Mothers! Our grandchildren shall behold a United States of Europe; they shall see a Universal Republic.

Great-hearted women, pass onward through the world with these sentiments in your hearts. You will save Europe, and bring happiness to all the earth.

When in Sweden, mistrusting an unstable peace, Anatole France wrote:

The most horrible of wars was followed by a treaty which was not a treaty of peace but a prolongation of war. It will spell the ruin of Europe unless, at long last, she finds a place for reason in her deliberations.

Many of his last utterances were concluded with this prayer, "May we be good Europeans."

At the Trocadéro, celebrations were being held in honour of his eightieth birthday. Upon this his last public appearing, four months before his death, he made an effort to say a word in response to every speech. Pale but erect, he stood at the edge of his box, and with all the force at his command, said, "Let us make Peace. If not, we shall not be forgiven."

In May 1924, having formed a plan of publishing what he had written about the war, he proposed to set aside anything which did not accord with his views of the moment. Some articles, for example, written at the beginning of the war had been, he felt, set down not only in indignation but in ignorance.

I had even suffered myself to make little speeches to the soldiers, living or dead, and I regret it as the outstanding mistake of my life.

In the month of August, in the presence of his wife and grandson, when he felt that the end was at hand, he once again carefully stipulated his wishes, specified things to be suppressed, and indicated the entire order of arrangement. With regard to the war, his emphatic last words were:

We must conclude by showing that the crowning wrong of the war was its prolongation.

THE DIALOGUE ON ASTRONOMY

A Talk on Astronomy is the last piece of writing upon which Anatole France was engaged. In connexion with his work upon it under the lime-trees in his garden at La Béchellerie in July 1924, he was reading a book by M Alphonse Berget, entitled *Le Ciel*.

Anatole France had set forth in notes, the characteristics of each planet "which the genius of man has weighed and measured," its dimensions compared with the earth, the duration of its day and year, the number of its satellites, the nature of its atmosphere, its distance from the sun, the heat and light irradiated by it. Thus Mars, Venus, Neptune, Uranus, et cetera, has each its *fiche*. The sun also is included, "aureoled by a crown of hydrogen." The stars he had classified in accordance with their brilliance, their speed, and their distance from the earth. The nearest star, Alpha of the Centaur, was eight trillion leagues away, eight thousand times farther away than Neptune.

Although the heavenly phenomena were familiar to him, he was always astonished "to behold the stars not as they are but as they were when the luminous ray which we now contemplate began its journey." The star which appears to scintillate before our eyes may have ceased to exist a thousand years ago, if light takes a thousand years to traverse the distance which separates us from that star. And he grumbled at those "unkind inclinations of the planetary axes which expose us to the successive changes of the seasons."

When he was studying the birth of the worlds, he noted that the spiral nebula of the Canes Venatici was "the most ancient evidence of the existence of matter." He once more put the old question to himself, the question whether life on this earth of ours is not an accidental phenomenon, a mouldiness, a lichen, and whether "we ourselves are not the product of some unhealthy decomposition." He tried to estimate the length of time that might have elapsed between the formation of the earth and the appearing upon it of organic matter—"in which we do not see life, but in which perhaps life is."

He considered also the hypothesis which would postpone the inevitable cooling of the sun—which asserts that planets will fall into the sun and restore its vigour, as in the fable of the Earth and Helios.

In addition to these notes, we find the log of one of those voyages upon which he so loved to embark, "across the solitudes of frozen ether." He described, as he passed on his way, the physiognomy of each planet. He showed the whole of our solar system speeding on its way towards the constellation of Hercules. Then crossing those frontiers "which our sight, armed with glasses and directed by abstruse calculations is unable to pierce," he penetrated into those infinite depths within which stars are forever dying and coming to birth. He said in conclusion:

The heavens, which human science explores, are not lapped in tranquillity. They are the theatre of scenes of death, of unimaginable catastrophes, and they, too, bring forth in travail.

Geology, botany, and palaeontology, also had attraction for Anatole France. Little given to reading periodicals, he subscribed for a certain medical review till the end of his life, and new scientific theories never left him indifferent. In a letter written in 1922, he says, "I am reading with interest a book on Einstein, in which the ideas of that scientist are explained without recourse to mathematics."

He observed one day that Sherlock Holmes knew nothing about motor-cars, telephones, and wireless telegraphy; and that with these, he could devise for his hero an entirely new set of adventures. One of those who first ventured to make a flight in an aeroplane, he remarked in alluding to the man whom he had had as pilot on that occasion:

He warned me that the landing would be sudden. But in this he exhibited no less delicacy than virtuosity because, when he spoke, we had already come to earth without my having so much as noticed it.

He ever recognized the necessity for an alliance between Science and Letters, and says in *The Bloom of Life*:

Science divorced from Letters remains mechanical and dull, and Letters divorced from Science are empty and hollow, for Science is the substance of Letters.

THE CYCLOPS

Towards the end of 1919 Anatole France conceived the idea of writing a novel to be entitled *The Cyclops*—a tragic-comic satire on humanity, after the style of *The Revolt of the Angels* and *Penguin Island*.

The action takes place in the future. A yacht is wrecked on the coast of Sicily. The passengers are saved. One of them thinks he sees "a giant seated on one of the mountain-peaks." He is told that he imagines it. Then another passenger exclaims, "I recognize the giant. It's a Cyclops."

How comes it that they find a Cyclops in Trinacria? The Cyclops, who had disappeared before civilization, reappear now that war has again plunged the world in barbarism.

The proposed plot is confirmed by a second note:

Cyclops anterior and posterior to civilization. Sicily had gone back to its pre-Homeric state when the yacht was shipwrecked.

The following reply is addressed to the shipwrecked passenger who first thought that he had seen a giant:

You have been taken in by a trick of Nature. It is a crag. In the same way, people once thought they saw the head of Napoleon on a mountainous island. It was close down on the summit and was topped by the famous Napoleonic hat. Now that twenty centuries have passed over the ashes of Napoleon, his image has faded from men's minds and travellers no longer see it above the island peaks.

The shipwreck, then, took place twenty centuries after Napoleon's death; and in what way were the Cyclops occupied? Alas, they made war, as is evident from the following outline of the novel, the word "Act" being taken to mean "Part."

ACT I

The shipwrecked folk.

The Satyrs.

Philosophic Dialogue.

Polyphemus, son of Poseidon and the nymph Thoosa.

Polyphemus, who is blind, is at war with the other Cyclops.

ACT II

Mobilization.

Philosophic Dialogue.

The Satyrs, mobilized.

ACT III

Polyphemus deems himself victor.

ACT IV

Defeat of Polyphemus.

Apart from these, we find still other notes concerning the regions designated by mythology as the home of the Cyclops; two or three passages from the *Odyssey* relating to Ulysses' arrival in the Land of the Cyclops and, finally, information with regard to the tonnage, dimensions, and fittings of the yacht.

In June 1921, after having finished *The Bloom of Life*, Anatole France writes:

I have finished the book about the memories of my young days.

I should like to commit myself to a more serious task, under the guise and outward semblance of a piece of burlesque.

In November 1921, having that same year been awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature, Anatole France made known his intention of writing a book against war. He expatiated on the advantages of making use of allegory for a work of that nature.

I wish to write this book in such a manner as will offend the susceptibilities of the least possible number of people, the least possible number of marshals, nay, of corporals. So I shall give it an allegorical form, as I did Penguin Island. Fables have this advantage: they enable a writer to present truth with a minimum of harshness and a maximum of effectiveness. Rabelais would have been burnt alive if he had not used allegory. Pierre Chaine was able to say all manner of things by putting them in the mouth of an animal clad in blue. I should like to slaughter lies without wounding men. . . . In fiction, it is true, blows are likely to glance off a little, but you can, by reason of this fact, hit the harder.

At my age, we either lose our memory, or else we remain in ignorance of new customs, and so there are many advantages in writing an allegorical story. In fiction you can do just as you like. If I commit solecisms, if I make people dine at seven o'clock, no one will be able to find fault, for the whole thing is fantasy.

When he reluctantly admitted to a preference among his books, it was evident that he preferred those in which he had set forth opinions, above those "in which he had been able to express convictions—saying what he thought."

The Cyclops, then, which was to have been at once "a book of opinions" and an allegory tempted him, but he delayed, saying in self-defence:

I'm too old. Look at Van Dongen's portrait of me.

He had also projected, as he expressed it, a "little novel" on Napoleon. Napoleon has left Elba. He has gone ashore at Golfe Juan and is making his way toward Paris. In the neighbourhood of Grenoble, he halts at the château of one of his adherents, a rich Dauphiny landlord. The owner of the château is out hunting and upon his return, Napoleon says to him, in a bantering tone, "Well, you didn't expect to find me here?"

Anxiety about another matter, the hostess forthwith communicates to her husband: their little daughter is ill. For the father, the mother, and the whole household, this attack of measles absorbs attention to the exclusion of everything else, taking precedence of the Emperor's return, of his pres-

ence there, and of all the mighty events which were shortly to convulse the world.

Anatole France had visited the Golfe Juan and Grenoble and had, he thought, at La Béchellerie two hundred volumes concerning the Emperor's sojourn on the Isle of Elba and his return to France. After the war, however, he was no longer tempted to write the book on the escape from Elba.

PIEDAGNEL

Firmin Piédagnel is a character of minor importance in the first part of *The Elm Tree on the Mall*. The son of an invalid shoemaker, whose shop was under the shadow of the church of Saint-Exupère, he was the most brilliant pupil at the Seminary. He was, however, without instinct for theology or for the priesthood. From the instructors at the Seminary, he had acquired merely the graces of classical scholarship and a kind of sentimental mysticism. The Abbé Lantaigne, the Superior of the Seminary, feared lest in this child, he might be fostering a redoubtable enemy of the Church—a Renan perhaps, and without so much as a word of explanation, dismissed him. Firmin Piédagnel was at first amazed, then rebellious.

And suddenly a feeling was born and grew within him, a feeling which sustained and fortified him, a hatred of priests, an undying and fertile hatred, a hatred commensurate with a lifetime.

Anatole France would have liked to develop this character, writing a novel around this delicate-souled and gentle person whom he, in some ways, closely resembled.

He had already employed the not uncommon method, whereby an author takes a passage in one of his own books as the starting point for another book. *A Mummer's Tale* is an expansion of a short story called *Chevalier* after the name of its hero. And *Thaïs* had an almost identical origin. He had roughed out the story of *Thaïs*, Anatole France explained, in a Fantasy on Lebiez and Barré, the murderers, who displayed, even when mounting the guillotine, a demeanour of such moving piety that the priest, who was there to assist them, was filled with wonder. Purified by the monk Paphnutius, *Thaïs* would go straight to Paradise, while Paphnutius himself, who had lost his soul for her sake, would groan in everlasting torment.

A sequel to *The Revolt of the Angels* is implied in a note which reads as follows:

The Sequel to the Revolt of the Angels.

What befalls the Angels during the war.

Their reflections.

The lamentations of Satan.

The triumph of Michael.

MONSIEUR GAULARD

Though it seems to form no part of any projected work, the following sketch belongs to the series of satirical portraits of learned professors which enliven the pages of *Pierre Nozière*, *Little Pierre*, and *The Bloom of Life*.

Monsieur Gaulard afforded me this spectacle for the thousand and first time. He was an imbecile, but of a rare species. We do not do justice to our imbeciles. They are always astonishing us. Their diversity is amazing. Nature has created innumerable varieties of them. Her resources, in this kind of task, are inexhaustible, whereas she gets out of breath at once when she creates a man of intelligence. Monsieur Gaulard, a patron of letters, never understood a line of what he read.

"It's abstract," he would suddenly remark, breaking off in his reading. His jaw would drop and he would cease to think. For he thought only with mouth shut.

He was tall, thin, and booby-faced. His enormous mouth housed an enormous tongue which filled it entirely. And when his mouth opened, his tongue eased itself by emerging through the open door. His visage, which inclined to sadness, took on an expression of profound gloom, as often as in desperation, he ejaculated, "It's abstract!"

He had read much, and chiefly admired Bossuet and Victor Cousin. He would have been happy, if he had not finally come to the conclusion regarding the teaching of those two great authors that "it, too, was abstract."

What significance was attached by him, to the term "abstract," this farthest confine of his thoughts? It is probable that for him the word meant "difficult to grasp, impossible to understand."

Anatole France was not content merely to deny and to demolish. In *The Red Lily*, he set down as its crowning precept:

Let us give unto men for witnesses and judges, Irony and Pity.

Twenty years later he reaffirmed this sentiment in *The Gods are Athirst*:

Men are not sufficiently perfect to exercise justice in the name of virtue: the rule of life should be indulgence and kindness of heart.

The End

EVENING

BY CECIL GREY

THE cigarette drooped in his fingers in such a way that the smoke flittered up occasionally into his eyes. He didn't care; for the few moments of smarting he closed his eyes, indifferent. When the slight pain ceased he opened his eyes, slothfully, heedlessly, and without conscious movement wiped away the tears with one hand; then his hand fell, drooping too, back upon the arm of the chair. He was hunched in the chair, very low down; his legs looked freaky, fading in the blue dark of the room. He didn't notice his legs; he was thinking. When his cigarette burned down and another one was lighted, it was not he who lighted it; if he had noticed it he would not have known that it was new. He was protected.

Thoughts were queer things; you gathered one out of the dimness, twirled it about in your brain-fingers, cauterized it, harrowed it, ensnarled it, made it a crystal, murky yellow-grey; then you discarded it. A space—and you reached out for another, and another, until finally the crystal came clear water-white, and you smiled, successful. If the crystal never quite escaped opaqueness, by however small a degree, then you were a failure to-night and your sleep was a running-away.

Sometimes you couldn't think at all. You sat down, ready to drop away, and you stayed right in the chair, and your crossed leg got prickly; the smoke from your cigarette kept getting into your eyes and making you angry; you smoked one cigarette after another and it was tiring and annoying to have continually to be lighting a new one. But when everything was right—you thought always when you sat down that you were right—and you were slouched down, your head rested finely on the soft leather back of the chair, something lowered over you, a veil, a web, gossamer light, and you were not in the room, were nowhere—you were just a mind-entity, undriven by volition and conscious will. You did not try to capture thoughts; you just captured them, or failed to. You realized how perfect it was only when you were brought back, and

sat on for a little while recalling yourself, re-establishing yourself, readjusting yourself to undesirable action. Yet—and you couldn't understand why; it really wasn't your fault—on the nights you were a failure there was a hurt in you and you wanted to hide.

To-night, successful, he came back reluctantly. He always had to come back, there was no escaping that; he hated it—hated it. Life; the door, and then the staircase—Why couldn't one. . . .

He walked slowly up the stairs.

POEM

BY E. E. CUMMINGS

supposing that i dreamed this)
only imagine, when day has thrilled
you are a house around which
i am a wind—

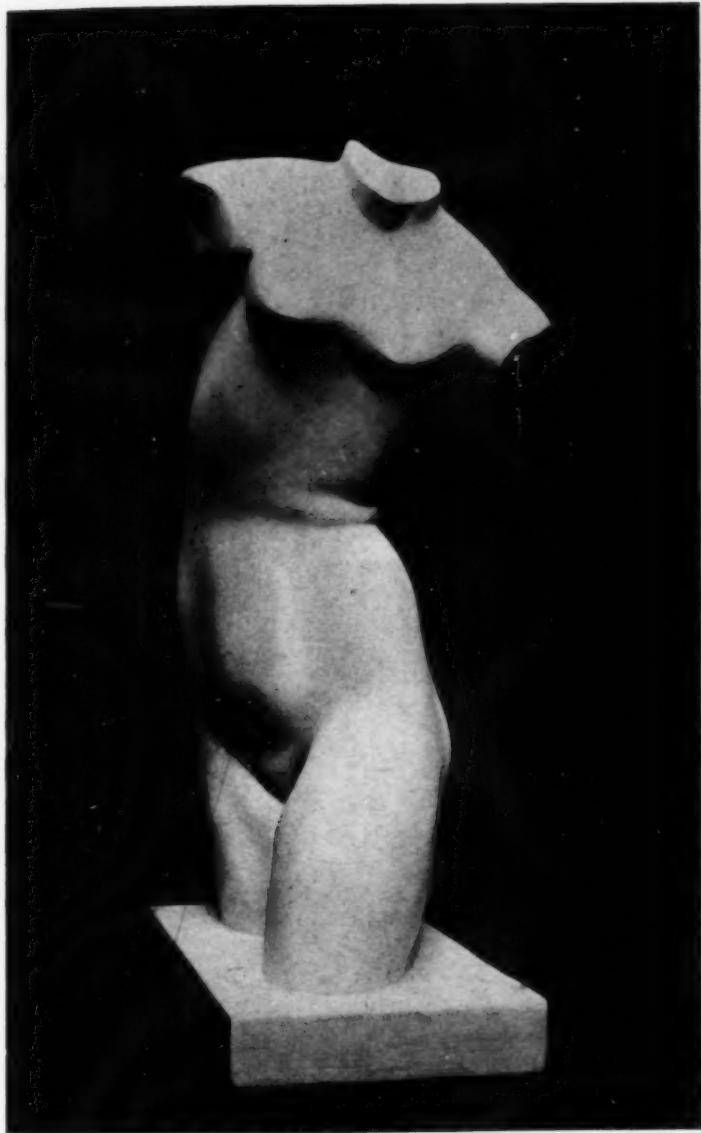
your walls will not reckon how
strangely my life is curved
since the best he can do
is to peer through windows, unobserved

—listen, for (out of all
things) dream is noone's fool;
if this wind who I am prowls
carefully around this house of you

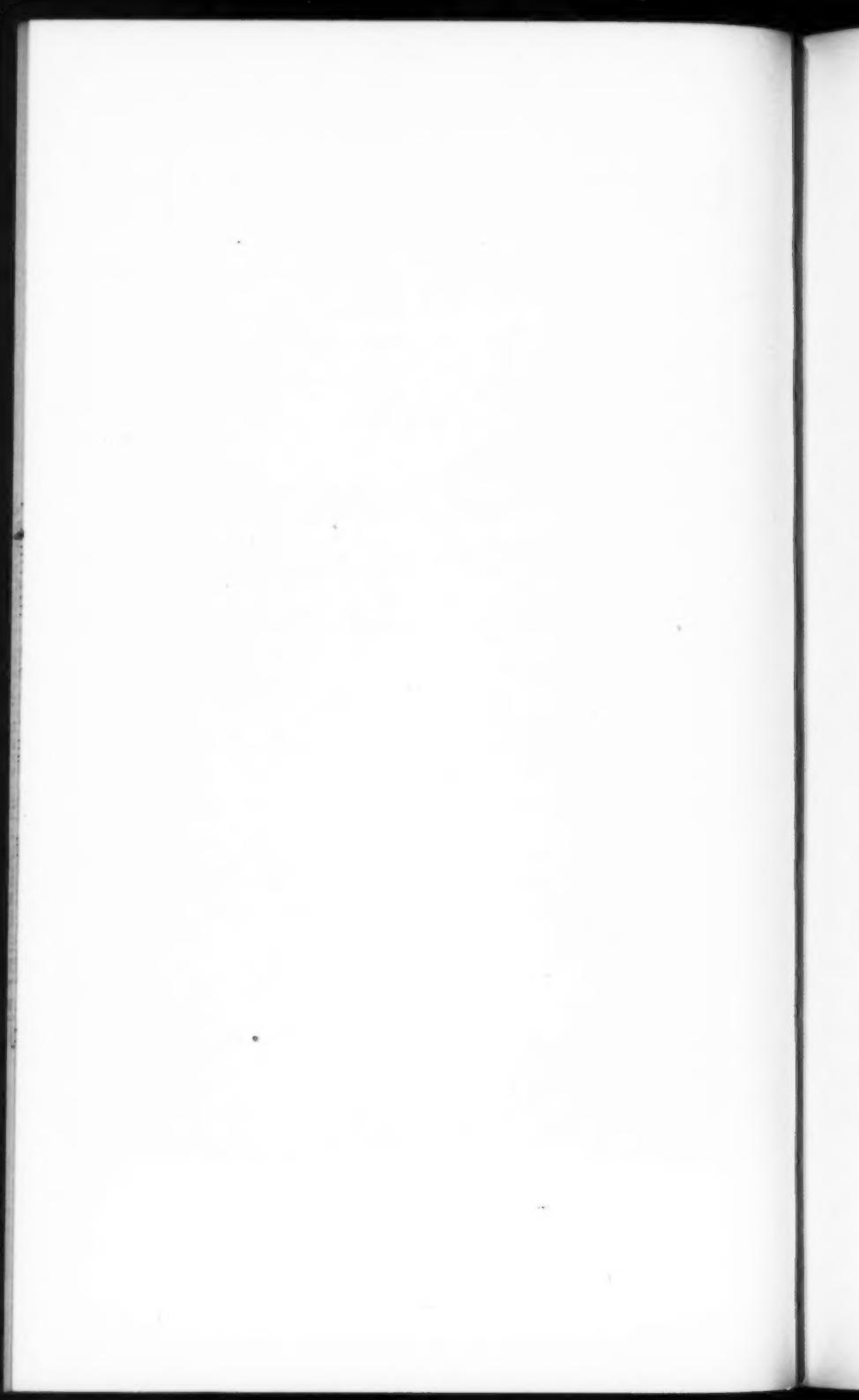
love being such, or such,
the normal corners of your heart
will never guess how much
my wonderful jealousy is dark

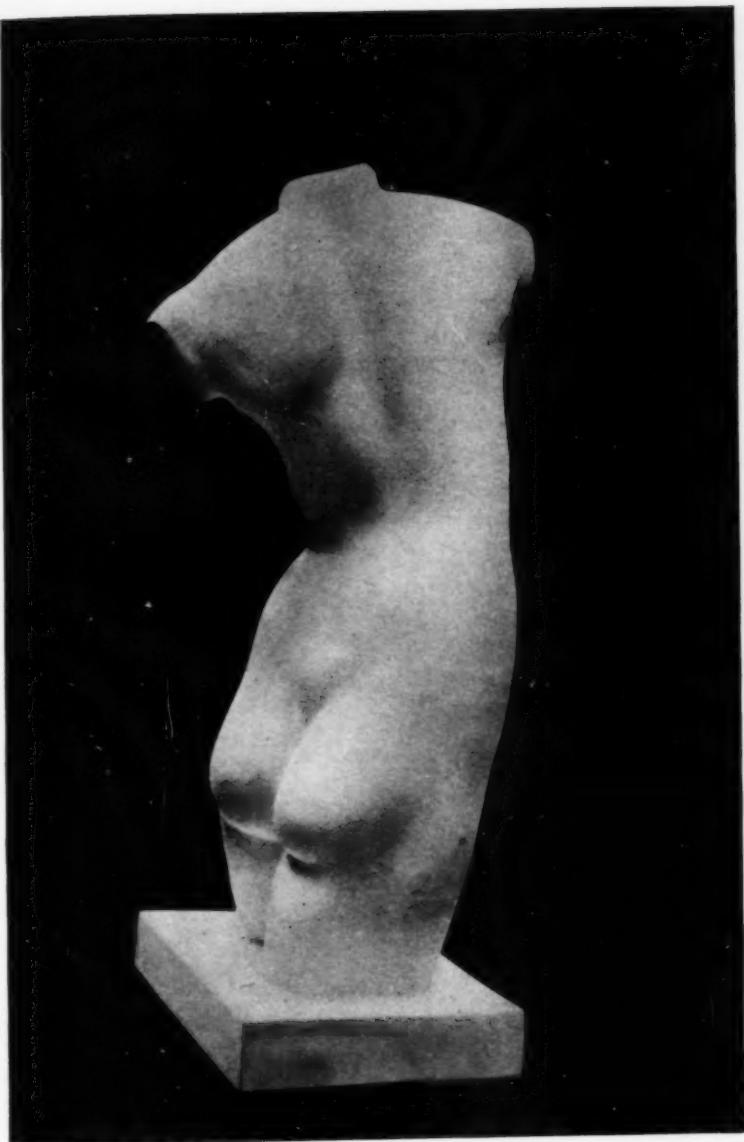
if light should flower:
or laughing sparkle from
the shut house (around and around
which a poor wind will roam

self,
dn't
you
ways
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TORSO. BY ALEXANDER ARCHIPENKO





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EMILY DICKINSON

BY CHARLES K. TRUEBLOOD

IN Emily Dickinson there seems to have been much of the visionary; if not in the general understanding of the word, then at least in the meaning that her imagination inclined to the form of inner vision rather than inner hearing, or other of the interior analogues of sense. Her verse-world, so brilliant and so intense, seems yet in a characteristic way, a world of soundless contemplation, of "quietness distilled," interrupted rarely, and perhaps only on her own terms, by small low sounds, or those falling gently on the ear, from far off. Not that she was without images of things vividly heard or felt, but that such images were not so frequent in comparison to images of things vividly seen, and when they did occur their vividness was more apt to be achieved by visual than by auditory or other figures; as for example, her "blue, uncertain, stumbling buzz" of the fly, or her wind as "tufts of tune," or as "caravans of sound." Again, she found, it seemed—for certainly she could communicate—a particular pleasure in vivid stillness, such as the silence of noon on certain summer days, or the soundless streak of a falling star, or the noiseless brilliance expressed in her conceit of butterflies "leaping off banks of noon, splashless as they swim." This distillation of temperament into vision, this brilliant quiet, might perhaps be more apparent if one contrasted her poetry with, for instance, the verse-world of Masefield, so thronged with the rich torturous riot of every sense. Yet in such contrasts we should be on guard; it is easy to make too much of a phrase. But if we accept the phrase with enlarging qualifications, if we understand it as only a hint of characteristics which may be more than the words can denote, or as a tentative bearing taken in surroundings where all is somewhat evanescent and transcending, then it may be of value in pointing at the great delicacy and great force which seemed to coexist in her individuality.

The combination of great delicacy and great force tends, no doubt, to be self-destructive in a serious sense; and we are not

without indications that it was so with her. In temperament particularly, delicacy and force might be considered to consist of the same thing, namely, feeling; delicacy relating to the subtlety of the incitement, and force to the depth of the resulting emotion. And that she possessed both such force of heart and such exquisiteness, there is much evidence, subtle as well as obvious. . . . It is evident in that pleasure in contemplation, un-invaded by the disturbing messages of the inferior senses, that delight in brilliant quiet, which has already been noted. It is evident in all that one may suppose as to the explanation of such an attitude, and deduce from the belief that her poetry, like other very original poetry, is the image, not of random thoughts or idle observations, but of fundamental wish, central to mental being. It is most of all obvious in the shrinking and reluctance with which she met the most usual and ordinary, even the most affectionate and tender, of human contacts.

Her shrinking was no gesture. It became an avoidance and a flight. Her involuntary reluctance grew with reiteration into deliberate escape. It passed into gossip, and from gossip into legend, in which it became sufficiently fantastic, one gathers, to furnish reason for an authoritative biography. Turning through this biography, the *Life and Letters*,¹ one has the impression that she fled the world because she felt indeed that it was too much with her. And taking at its face value, as in fact we should, the description therein of her sensibility—from which it appears that the burning of a neighbour's straw shed more played upon her than an earthquake would upon the average person—we may indeed consider that she escaped from circumstance because it too rollingly echoed in her mind. Yet here again we might well be on guard. For while we can accept this truth of her as far as it goes, we may find, if we trace the growth of her inwardness both forward and back, that the truth so stated is not quite all the truth. The ivory tower aspect of her seclusion is perfectly intelligible as a refinement upon the general world, as a preservation of treasures of feeling from an excess of irrelevance, as a great factor, no doubt, in contribution to the purity and flowering of her rare poetic instinct. Yet perhaps this seclusiveness was but the outer appearance of an inward

¹ *Life and Letters of Emily Dickinson*. Edited by M. D. Bianchi. Illustrated. 8vo. 386 pages. Houghton Mifflin Company. \$4.

bias which not only began much earlier and deeper, but also, in the end, went much farther. Her solitude, one comes to feel, began long before it became obvious, and went much deeper than was ever apparent. And her rare subtle knowledge of the interiors of the spirit, which we now so much remark upon, was perhaps derived from the length, as well as the sadness and the intensity of her dwelling there.

Her solitude must indeed have dated, in some part, from the time she began temperamentally to be more than a child. It seems reasonable to think it began in her relation to her family, that is, really her relation to her father; for the family all dwelt, though they seemed not to have been aware of it, in the shadow of his personality. He was a man of gentle feeling, great intelligence, but tremendous primness. The last, perhaps, was his marking trait, for the public encomiums of him betray a general impression of immense respectability. As a young man he had signed his kindly frosty letters to his *fiancée* as her "most ob't servant, Edward Dickinson." And his portrait rather confirms the tale. We see a handsome man of eminent look, but with that perhaps unconscious austerity in lips and brow and carriage of the head, which strikes with awe, not alone the hearts of sinners, but how much more those of the ingenuous and the timid. A culprit could, in imagination, feel himself slipping, slipping, hopelessly, down the smooth cold sides of that austerity—unless help were vouchsafed from above, as often it was, except in reprehensible cases; yet none would have dared hope for it.

But on the one marked character at the Dickinson hearth, the force of his respectability was imperfectly effective. In Emily there had been early apparent the sparkle of more than ordinary question. It was timid Emily, alone of three hundred girls in the Mt Holyoke Seminary, who publicly and victoriously defied the regimen of Mary Lyon on the question of whether Christmas-day should be spent with fasting and prayer at the seminary, or in celebration at home with one's family. It was Emily, in the seemly Dickinson household, who enjoyed irreverence, and who grew off-hand with accepted revelation, and saw in the austereities of the public God, merely an infinitude of tedium. It was Emily, only, who could write whimsically to herself, regarding the God of her own solitude:

"I hope the father in the skies
Will lift his little girl,—
Old-fashioned, naughty, everything,—
Over the stile of pearl!"

With the growth in force of so much individuality, what of the forbearing, but massive and immovable respectability that was Edward Dickinson? Could he understand a mind so like his, in some ways, and so different? And what if he could not? Would there be submerged collision? and with what result? Or if there were no collision, what became of the opposition? Force does not evaporate; and as to the growing fact of her force and the established fact of her father's force, or the family force, there could be no doubt.

Adjustment to one's world is generally thought to consist either of remaking oneself or of remaking the world. But it seemed that she did neither: she moved to a brilliant and subtle solitude leagues within. Without shrinkage, but rather with an increase of her mental and temperamental powers—or perhaps one should say an increase in their effectiveness—a process of withdrawal inward began, which, it seemed, never quite ended.

Her interiorization gained impetus from what is usually understood to have been its main cause; this was her encounter with love. It took place in 1853, her twenty-third year. She was, during this year, in Washington and Philadelphia with her father, who at the time was a member of Congress. In Philadelphia she met the man, whose name is not revealed, with whom she fell in love; he was married. When she realized the state of her feeling, she fled back to Amherst, where he followed her. The biography relates that one day

"Sister Sue looked up from her sewing to see Lavinia, pallid and breathless from running, who grasped her wrist with hurrying hand, urging 'Sue come! That man is here!—Father and Mother are away, and I am afraid Emily will go away with him.'"

But it does not appear that the contemplated moral succour was required for Emily. The Dickinson generations, it seemed, had already spoken in her blood. She went on with life in her father's

house, showing no outward mark of this crisis except an "unexplained picture in a heavy oval frame of gold," hanging on the wall of her room, and an increase of turning from the world, which soon, no doubt, became apparent enough. "To the faithful," she wrote, "absence is condensed presence. To the others—but there are no others."

Now, one would think, she sought the rare inner air of spirit; and it was now, perhaps, as the turmoil of the actual died upon her ear, as she found in some degree the distance, the silence, the light, the "bright detachment" which she sought in anguish, it was now that her poems began, as the private day-book of her heart; for she intended most of them, it seemed, for no other eyes. They mark rememberably the character of her solitude for force and delicacy. Could such tumultuous precision have been achieved otherwise than through her characteristic visionism, so powerful and yet so far from gross? In it only, perhaps, was the full force of a great temperament to find an expression utter and complete, tremendous and yet delicate. Indeed such burning filigree may mark out for us, as well as anything can, how much more discriminated, how much more useful to the mind and heart, how much greater the world of vision can be than the worlds of the other senses; and how much more we should choose it, if a choice were to be made.

Perhaps it is because this was the direction which her brilliant silent vehemence took; perhaps it is because her retreat inward was to the bright observatories, and not the dark recesses of spirit, that her utterance shows so little of the morbidness which often accompanies the growth inward of mental being. In the deepest mazes of her solitude, it seemed, touch was brilliantly kept with the exteriors of the actual, by the clearest, the finest, and, for her, the most characteristic of the senses. Perhaps the great vitality of that contact by vision is the essence, in part, of her poetic originality. "The eye begins its avarice," she wrote, and the words may have more than their immediate meaning. Her individuality, apparently, made its impress upon her world especially through vision; through vision she exercised her abounding share in that fine lyric tyranny, which makes the poet's whole world the private possession of his personality.

It may have been a phase of this visionism, existing in her love

of contrasts, and coupled with an arch humour, which was at the core of her characteristic whimsical charm. It is best shown in a species of inverse hyperbole, a favourite mode with her, in which the lion and the lamb are made to lie down together, in which things strange and vast are put in the same figurative company with things homely and small. She likes to speak of "Vesuvius at home," of God as "a noted clergyman," or as "Papa above," of the storm winds as "dogs defeated of a bone," of Eden as "the ancient homestead," or that "old-fashioned house we dwell in every day," of her own being as a tiny craft among "stately sails" oblivious alike of its presence and its absence. These things, possibly, were only whimsicalities, but perhaps they were more too. Since the poet cannot but draw his own likeness, and project the properties of his own feeling into what he describes, was there, in this inverse hyperbole, not only whimsicality, but—what was another phase of her delicacy and her shrinking—an effort to make the gross world less strange and painful by stamping it with the character of her own vision, by figuring it in the terms of her own experience?

It was thus perhaps that she rebuilt her world, of treasured and familiar things, deep within, and distant from fearful circumstance. Built too, seemingly, of the substance of vision, it was as powerfully yet lightly wrought as she could make it. But the more she built its loveliness, the more she was contained within it. And since with so vital a temperament, the creative substance must have been almost continuously forming, in a sort of reverberation to the delicate pronouncements of the senses, the progress of her imprisonment must indeed have been steady. How keenly she became aware of those unseen bars is only too evident in her great lyric longings for escape; and the escape in this instance is a far different thing from the old escape from circumstance. It is the prison of herself from which she now wants extrication. One sees it first, perhaps, in her whimsical longing for namelessness:

"How dreary to be somebody!
How public, like a frog,
To tell your name the livelong day
To an admiring bog!"

Or perhaps it first appeared in the wish, implied more than a few times in her poetry, to be absorbed in a sympathetic force greater than herself, or as great in a different way. And as the inward tendency progresses, one begins to discern its characteristic final forms. That brilliant inner prison is becoming too confining. From longing for namelessness, one observes the progress to longing for greater freedom. "What," she wrote,

"What if I file this mortal off,
See where it hurt me,—that's enough,—
And wade in liberty?"

For that indeed is finally the sole escape for those who are too much caught in the prisons of themselves.

Strong as was this lyric prison, it was yet based in other things, outside her personality. It was, in fact, only a slender mansion in her father's house. And when, in June 1874, her father suddenly died, a strange, unthought-of night fell indeed on her cherished "bright detachment." If he had not understood her temperamentally, or perhaps in any way, he had yet never intruded, and he had shown an immense if prim tenderness, in which she and the others of his family had long dwelt. How much he must have been in that household we can only imagine, except as we have it vividly said in his daughter's poem:

"We learn in the retreating
How vast an one
Was recently among us.
A perished sun

Endears in the departure
How doubly more
Than all the golden presence
It was before!"

And from her manner of speaking in numerous poems of life, death, the grave, and eternity, it seems evident that this loss tore a ghastly breach in her inner citadel. In these poems there is not the old note

of longing, which was yet so airy and so alive; there is not the whim in the description of the wind as having "no bone to bind him," which was also her description of her own wish-to-be. This quietism is not so brilliant or so poised for soaring; instead there are deep painful looks at the exteriors of our mortality, in those final moments when the frost is mantling in the clay. Instead, as elsewhere in her poems, of looking forward to the beginning of the bodiless, there is here rather an overmuch of the ending of the body. Instead of the privacy of the breeze, here is the privacy of the low dwelling. The idea of escape seems to have metamorphosed into the idea of refuge, and one cannot be sure but that the note of refuge—in the tomb—was the note on which she ended. It is indeed a possible conclusion to inwardness.

That her exquisite vision should have dwelt so steadfastly, so powerfully, and so often, on the conclusion of our poor clay is perhaps one of the most formidable of the objections to calling her a mystic, as has been done—loosely, one would think. Would the dead flesh have looked so stricken, if she had not been of "that religion which doubts as fervently as it believes"? Indeed, in calling her a mystic are we not blurring the outlines of her characteristic effect? Is not to call her a mystic to deny, in a way, her unequalled general sensitivity? The mystic is but too often polarized by his sustained and indiscriminate ecstasy. But not in all her life was she so polarized. Does not the immense value of her poetry lie in the fact that rather than mysticism it is the rarest of lyric asceticism? Is not that the secret of the strange fine intelligence of the heart, and the comfort that so many have found in her, so many of the stricken? When has stoic's metal been struck to a more exquisite chiming?

II

Consistent with the delicacy and the force of heart which were noticed as so characteristic of her individuality, there appears as perhaps her principal literary quality a certain lyric incisiveness, a bright passionate brevity, a sensitive immediacy of word to thought. In poetry one grows accustomed to think of incisiveness as often secured by discreet abrasure; of the brevity in question as a studied brevity, for which the faculties required may be merely intelligence and fine attention; and of immediacy as the product

of much choosing. Yet in her case the reverse seems true. For her, apparently, to think and write pointedly, briefly, and with the happiest immediacy of word to thought was as natural as to feel powerfully.

There is, in her verse, an obvious absence of studio finish. . . . She was evidently inattentive to the more or less "artistic" arts of metrical and phrasal music, and appears readily capable of letting the verse-scheme of a poem, and even the syntax, stumble or scramble, in a curious carelessness of everything but the flash of vision and the gold of phrase. What she says seems always said with the choicest originality, but not always with poetic fluency, or even much attempt at it. And while it perhaps should be remembered in this connexion, that most of her poems were written strictly for herself, often probably as the notes of her thoughts, the marginalia in her private book of experience, which she had no idea that others than herself would ever see, it still does not seem certain that the result would have been widely different had she been writing formally and for publication.

These oddities of structure and finish seem to betray the fact that a poem of hers is almost wholly first thought and not after-thought. Compare her work with that of A. E. Housman, who dealt with many of the same themes, and some of the difference due to after-thought should appear. The verse of Housman, direct and piercing as it is, seems yet to reflect multiplied exclusions, and a final simplicity that has been minutely wrought. The poems of Emily Dickinson seem to reflect simply the direct feelings of a profound heart. They seem less works of infinitely considered art, in which the effort has been guided to achievement by a subtly taught sense of poetic effect, than merely the spontaneous motions of a rich sensibility phrased with natural immediacy in language, which, if irregular, is of sparkling definition.

There was, of course, nothing merely wandering about her poetic effort. However wholly from the heart her poems may seem to come, no one who much reads them can escape the impression that poetry, in her hands, becomes in good share a mental magic. Her trenchant measures are as free from the dwelling unction of the merely sensuous as they are free from the mere piecing out of insight. The penetrating phrases into which her thought and feeling are sharpened are set down with a close economy that sometimes has the effect of extreme fine dryness. And as significance

is the substance of her force, so her verse follows the forms of wit as much as the forms of sense. Her poems might indeed be called epigrams. They might be called conceits, too, being often so whimsical, and so edging on quaintness in their originality; they might be called conceits that is, were they less fervently intended. And whether conceits or epigrams, they seem always at the key of the often intangible matter, and have not only general pointedness but specific point.

To the service of her feeling she brought, perhaps as corollary to her characteristic inner vision, a rare and singular sense of words. Words, to her, were a festival; and she spent, as the biography notes, hours with the dictionary. And since there are not many of her single words that would not have been feasible and usual in ordinary intercourse, we can reasonably imagine that she must have been finding again the hidden, vivid textures in old meanings, restoring for herself the lost edges of ordinary expression, searching out the forgotten but astounding faces of customary words. It strikes one, too, that she had very positively that tremendous command of "things used as words," which, to Emerson, so marked the authentic poet. And to this command, one cannot forbear thinking, her escape from circumstance added, curiously, much strength and nourishing. Is it too much to suppose that when she contracted her existence, she increased, in certain ways, its depth and height? that when she then looked at the things of her lessened life, it was more than before with the remarkable eyes of the imagination? that she then erected the familiar objects in her round of deeper days, with powerful lyric conviction into symbols of far things? In her verse noon does not always mean merely noon; it seems sometimes to stand for the possibilities of a greater glory. Nor are storms seen from covert merely storms seen from covert; they call up thoughts of the refuge everlasting, even if that refuge be only the grave. It is not to be contended, surely, that symbolism achieved through so rich a temperament cannot add a weight to words.

Not only by symbolism, which seems a thing so elemental and so directly of the heart, but by her figures of speech, the products of her sense of similarity, her acute visualizing mentality, did she add strength to her verse. Her characteristic figure, perhaps, was metaphor, and it is apparently in the quality of her metaphor, and

in the fact that not only her metaphor, which out-stands, but all the smaller parts of her poetic utterance are made of the same vivid, chiefly visual substance, that her extraordinary poetic distinctiveness lives. Filled with the clearest colours and the most consummate lights, her poetic speech seems alive, to its smallest parts, with its special sparkle. Where is to be found a figurative note like hers in its combination of delicate brilliance and trenchant quaintness, its piquancy and its sincere fervour? It sets a mode in imagination that could find no fashions, for its secret is not detachable. Here, indeed, we are as close as we shall get to the language of her individuality; and here we must rest merely with observing the force of spirit evident in its lightest terms. It recalls again that her poetry was not professional; that it was but a means by which she constructed her "bright detachment," and partly lightened a weight of thinking.

It must also have been, in the same direction, a laying up of the treasures of comprehension, of her deep knowledge of the interiors of the spirit, gained, evidently, with so much anguish. In her poems, said to have been found, for the most part copied on note-paper, and laid away, tied with ribbon, in little bundles, each of six or eight sheets, one can refresh his feeling and thinking, secure that in what he thus comes back to, he will find no waning of choiceness. This brilliant understanding of the heart and its suffering, this great sensory delicacy, is rare essential wealth, proof against tarnish. It is seldom that one finds surer gold.

PARIS LETTER

March, 1926

THREE was a time when we were, so to speak, incapable of leaving Paris, not just because as Frenchmen we had a horror of travelling, nor altogether because we hated nature and the country—a prejudice which, apart from modifying foreign influences during the romantic period, has characterized ten centuries of French literature. Paris was a jealous city, demanding of the faithful all or nothing. In order to really understand the capital, divided as it was into a hundred coteries, into *ruelles*, and later into *salons*, cafés, and boulevards, it was necessary to keep in touch with the happenings of each day, with the gossip, the tendencies, and the tastes of a public at once suspicious, hard to please, and all-powerful. No longer an exacting tyrant, Paris is to-day a modern woman, nervous, avid for novelty, offering herself to the latest comer, in love with inconstancy, faithful only upon condition that her lover is unfaithful. But if the main interest of the human drama is often elsewhere, Paris remains none the less the most highly sensitized magnetic needle in the world, and it is impossible to be long away without wishing to take one's bearings by her compass. Returning after six months' absence, I find several twilights, a new dawn or two, and one or more revolutions in the world of talent and thought. Not to mention an infinitude of books with which alone in my study I build mountains out of the thoughts of my fellow-writers. I cannot speak of them here, since I must submit to the tragedy of being brief.

The year 1926 is ushered in by three important books which I shall discuss later: *Albertine Disparue*, by Marcel Proust (the next to last book in *A la Recherche du Temps Perdu*); *Bella*, a significant novel by Giraudoux; and *Les Faux Monnayeurs*, by André Gide. But before commenting upon them, I must clear the ground of what has accumulated so quickly.

As first incidents of the season 1925-1926, let me speak of the Goncourt Prize awarded to Maurice Genevoix, the author of the novel, *Raboliot*, and of the Fémina Prize awarded to Joseph

Deltiel, in recognition of his essay on Jeanne d'Arc. The prestige of the Goncourt Prize which, immediately after the war, was unquestioned by a certain portion of the French public, has diminished year by year. Recently the award has been made to books that were mediocre, outmoded, and without lustre. If this continues for two or three years, the Académie Goncourt and the old Naturalists who are its members will fall into oblivion. The time has passed when the book crowned by the Goncourts was of necessity "the best seller of the year."

At this moment in France, two phenomena, I think, are to be noted. The first is a great Neo-Catholic revival. I must confine myself here to an examination of its literary aspect. Since the Great War, as everyone knows, there has been in France and in many other countries a religious renaissance. Sufferings of war, disappointments of peace, Bolshevism, ruins; everywhere people have begun to organize resistance of mind to matter. A re-crudescence of magic, of mysticism, and of the need to believe, as well as the recent tentative union of several branches of the Christian faith are all symptomatic. (Shall we perhaps some day have the spectacle of a kind of "trust" of the various religions?) Literature, furthermore, shows the effect of the new spirit. A great writer, Paul Claudel, whose glory was for a time unjustly obscured, has, thanks to the religious spirit that pervades his work, achieved a new celebrity. The Catholic theorist and philosopher Maritain, who sees in Thomism and in St Thomas Aquinas the breviary of modern faith and thought, is editor of the publications entitled *Le Roseau d'Or*, which, with the series *Christianisme*, published by Rieder, is full of new names and of works imbued with an intense spirituality; among them the writings of Max Jacob and the first Catholic poems of Jean Cocteau—Cocteau having yielded ardent obedience to the new current. His conversion, or more accurately, his filial submission to the Catholic religion was much talked of last summer. Several other literary conversions are announced. Paul Claudel, before returning as Ambassador to Japan, published his *Morceaux Choisis*, and *Figures de Saints*, studies in hagiography unequalled since the great book of Ernest Hello, *Physionomies de Saints*. André Gide has translated and revealed William Blake to that discriminating public which is his. Two books on Saint Theresa will appear at the same time.

The second phenomenon to be noted, is that the Super-Realistic writers, the one-time Dadas, have gone over to Bolshevism and have given their allegiance to Moscow. First occasioned by a literary dispute (a noisy protest against nationalism, insults to Paul Claudel, encouragement to Abd-el-Krim) their attitude has since become fixed, and their leaders, Breton and Aragon, are to-day editors of the Bolshevik review, *Clarté*, which, abandoning the vague and stagnant welter of Barbussist humanitarianism, has been rejuvenated by the united talent of the young Super-Realists. This turn of affairs should not surprise us. Heirs of Barrès, their goal like his was inevitably politics. It is all quite logical; the cult of the unconscious, the liking for Russian literature, the lure of Asia, everything was conducive to this result. And now their position has become identical with that of Anatole France, whom they hate . . . and not without reason. One may question of course whether the determination to make a clean sweep of the past is consistent with a blind acceptance of Marxianism. However that may be, the slight rôle accorded the intellectuals by Bolshevism and the disdain in which they are held, are not calculated to enhearten our new revolutionists. Perhaps they hope to change all this, remembering that revolution in western Europe has been possible only when prepared for and sponsored by men of letters. In any case, the entrance upon the political scene of the two most interesting writers of the younger generation will, I hope, raise the tone of the debate, and provide the opportunity for some pretty verbal warfare. All things considered, I should rather, if I may say so, live guillotined by Aragon than honoured by Paul Bourget.

Returning to the calmer waters of pure literature, I must call attention to three remarkable first books, all published by the *Nouvelle Revue Française*. The first is *La Ville Anomyne* by a young French writer, André Beucler. Beucler, whose mother was Russian, brings to French literature a new note, a note of strangeness and fantasy not unfamiliar in English and in German, but hitherto unknown in French. The second book, *Paulina 1880*, is a remarkable study in psychology, and at the same time a restrained, exact, and charming picture of Italy since 1870. The third is *Jacob*, by Bernard Lecache, depicting certain Jewish *milieux* in Paris. For Paris has become a little New York, a veritable "melting-pot," whose novel aspect tempts our younger writers.

The new book of Drieu la Rochelle, entitled *L'Homme Couvert de Femmes*, is his best work, and was received as the best work of an author usually is—with less favour than his former books. It is the picture of a somewhat lax society—which must not be considered typical of French life—presented with the attractive mingling of softness and egotism, of mental inelasticity and generous scorn, which constitutes the appealing quality of this writer; we need not stress certain obscenities which are after all only the protest of a mind tormented by ideals of purity. Aragon's *Libertinage* and *La Femme Française* have had on this book an obvious and salutary influence. *Méditation sur un Amour Défunt* was received last summer with moderate enthusiasm. The author, M Berl, a young disciple of Drieu, has written a book which bears the mark of his own individuality—simple and cynical; and distinguished by the analytic penetration which is characteristic of his race. I should like to note in passing *Le Navire Aveugle*, by J. Barreyre, interesting as a first book; and *Battling Malone*, by Louis Hémon, hitherto unpublished, which, in contrast to *Le Navire Aveugle*, is a last book—one of the many posthumous works of the author of *Maria Chapdelaine*.

Now that everybody—not excepting the French—travels, books on foreign countries have become more interesting and better documented. The new edition of Maspéro's *China* may be added to those standard works on the subject by Reclus, Hovelacque, and Père Huc. Albert Londres' lively sketches, *La Chine en Folie*, make entertaining reading; notably one very amusing caricature of Tchang-Tso-Lin. Madame Sylvain Lévi, who accompanied her husband on the triumphal tour of the Orient which the great French student of India made two years ago, has published a travel-diary, entitled *Dans l'Inde*.

As literary criticism I can recommend *Lamartine*, by P. Hazard, R. Benjamin's *Balzac* (of the Maurois-Strachey school of biographical fiction) and by Frédéric Lefèvre, *Les Entretiens avec Paul Valéry*, in which the great poet (whom the French Academy has just elected to fill the chair of Anatole France) sets forth his doctrines, often esoteric; also his views upon art. By the same author we have the third volume of those celebrated interviews, called *Une Heure Avec . . .*, in which Ossendowski, Thomas Hardy, G. K. Chesterton, Claudel, Pierre Benoit, and others submit to interrogation.

Among the books on art, the *Manet*, by Rosenthal, the *Dessins d'Honoré Fragonard et d'Hubert Robert* (published by Delteil) and, of especial importance, *La Comédie Italienne*, by Duchâtre, seem to me worthy of note. All lovers of the *commedia dell'arte* will want to own this last-named work, authoritative, admirably illustrated, replete with erudition, yet delightfully written and within the comprehension of all.

Among books of scientific interest one can read with profit *Crime et Criminels*, by Locard, the eminent criminologist; and *Le Crépuscule des Nations Blanches*, by Muret. The success of the latter in the United States is certain. Developing the thesis of Lothrop Stoddard, M Muret insists particularly upon the political aspect of the problem, and shows that Ghandomism, Wilsonism, Bolshevism, the Panturanian movement in Angora, and the demagogery of the African colonies are so many insults to the white race, which is everywhere (and I have noticed the same thing recently in the Orient) losing "face," and is no longer either admired or even feared. However, M Muret, like Dr Legendre in *Tour d'Horizon Mondial*, does not despair of the future of the white race, provided that resistance is immediately organized. The Americans who form with Germany the great natural rampart of our race (the next Peloponnesian War will take place in the Rockies or in Honolulu) and who alone attach to the study of racial problems all the importance they deserve, will follow with interest the beginning of a serious consideration of these questions in France—a country which has until recently been blind to their significance.

PAUL MORAND

BOOK REVIEWS

THE RHYTHM OF VERSE

WHAT IS RHYTHM? By E. A. Sonnenschein. 12mo.
228 pages. Basil Blackwell. 10/6.

WHAT is rhythm? is asked with the ulterior purpose of reaching a better theory of English verse. Thus it becomes the question that has notoriously parted friends and left "sweet bells jangled out of tune and harsh." No subject like metric to possess a man with a new revelation, which he holds and imparts as a seer. Well, therefore, that it should be discussed by a scholar to whom years have brought ripeness. For he enters the old quarrel of time and stress. The larger question of his title, What is rhythm? is considered only in the brief first chapter, and only to open his interpretation of the rhythm of verse. "Rhythm is that property of a sequence of events in time which produces on the mind of the observer the impression of proportion between the durations of the several events or groups of events of which the sequence is composed." The definition "speaks of *durations*; for *time*, in the sense of the relative durations of events, is the fundamental feature of rhythm." Merely indicating the evidence for this general definition, the book proceeds to even shorter chapters on rhythm in music, music and verse, rhythm in isosyllabic verse, gives more space to Greek verse, still more to Latin verse, and the remaining four chapters, about half the book, to English verse. Prose rhythm is excluded. The foot-notes and appendices show so wide a consideration of both theory and laboratory experiment as to constitute a serviceable bibliography. In two hundred twenty-eight pages Professor Sonnenschein manages to be not only comprehensive, but generous. In a field of criticism where differences have provoked irritation and stiffened intolerance he holds an even tenor.

The opening definition of rhythm in general must be judged finally by science, and, as the author rightly insists, by psychology as well as by physics. Their evidence toward showing that re-

currences known to be rhythmical are identical with other recurrences caught by the eye or felt in the muscles he merely indicates. Without denying his right in so brief an essay to assume what he himself accepts as to the scope of rhythm, we must be on our guard against using this assumption as more than a provisional hypothesis.

“There’s not the smallest orb which thou behold’st
But in his motion as an angel sings,”

may be truer than Shakespeare knew; it may coincide with the theory that motor recurrences and time recurrences are one; or it may be as misleading a notion as the rhythm of the money market. Brûnétière’s transference of the word *evolution* from biology to the history of literature has hardly defined and furthered enquiry as he hoped. In so tangled and disputed a matter as rhythm we must be even more wary. On the other hand, if we find rhythm in architecture, for instance, we must question the focus of Professor Sonnenschein’s definition on time.

Meanwhile, within the narrower scope of the so-called time arts, music, dance, and verse, whose movement is rhythmical indubitably and essentially, does this definition further enquiry? In particular shall we read, and perhaps write, verse better by conceiving its rhythm as always and singly “relative durations”? To assume that in all these three arts rhythm is recurrence *in time* means usually no more than to segregate them from the arts that are conditioned by space; and certainly it is not equivalent to admitting that rhythm is necessarily recurrence *of times*. Rather here has been repeatedly the very point of controversy. To ask What is rhythm? is to ask what constitutes the recurrence, what guides the artist and his audience, what is the control. To answer that this is essentially time in the sense of “relative durations” is to rule out stress rhythm by definition. Though stress is afterward discussed incidentally, the procedure is prejudicial.

For rhythm has long been felt and described not as single and constant throughout music, dance, and verse, but as either of two typical modes: one which guides us by time (i.e., by “relative durations”) as in music and in Greek verse; the other which guides us by stress, as in dance and in German verse. That time and

stress are not mutually exclusive, that they may coincide or variously combine, we know from songs and from dance music. But in each case we feel one or the other as dominant, as controlling as the rhythm. Where the verse control is time, stress becomes subsidiary; where it is stress, time becomes subsidiary. In this sense metrists speak of time rhythm and stress rhythm, of quantitative verse and accentual verse. They mean not that any refined verse ignores either time or stress, but that every verse has one alone for its control. Horace's "*Integer vitae*," read aloud as it was intended, is in time rhythm; sung, as frequently in colleges, to the tune of a familiar hymn, it is still in time rhythm, though in another time; but imitated in Latin poems of the middle age, when its language was differently spoken, its "Sapphics" sometimes are transformed into a stress rhythm. So the "hexameters" of Goethe or of Longfellow have a different rhythm from those of Vergil. So we say that Poe misread Horace when he tried to render a famous ode in stress rhythm:

"Maécenas, átavis, édite, régibus."

We can hardly conceive of rhythm as an equal and simultaneous control by both time and stress. Verse, indeed, is composite, as music is, or dance; it consists of more than its rhythm; but that rhythm is single. Nor do Professor Sonnenschein's analyses to show recognition of quantity in English verse suffice to show dual rhythm. Rather his inference, though it is not always clear, must be, according to his definition, that English verse after all is in time rhythm, and more widely that stress in verse is always subsidiary, not constituting the rhythm, but merely beating the time. The distinction of two verse rhythms, then, must be an illusion. There can be only one rhythm.

This theory, which Professor Sonnenschein is not alone in holding, runs counter to the experience of passing from one language group to another. In the ordinary experience of learning to speak French our main difficulty is with rhythm. Our English stress habit is found to be incompatible. As for French verse, to read it acceptably to a Frenchman is at first quite beyond us. One great advantage of learning French is to enhance our awareness of vowel length and of pitch. From this we rise to appreciation

of the control of French verse by time. We learn another rhythm. As the attempt to force stress rhythm upon French verse at once violates the language and fails, so does the attempt of a Frenchman to force time rhythm upon English verse. In English, as in other Germanic languages, the rhythmical use of a word is determined by the stress. So constant is this habit that it holds even in the rare cases where the stress shifts. Fourteenth-century English usage permitted in verse a variable stress for foreign words. Thus the word *country* might be pronounced either *cóntrée* or *contrée*; and its fitting into the rhythm of a line depended solely on the way which it was stressed. Thus the length of the syllables composing the word *oasis*, which troubles Professor Sonnenschein on page 127, does not determine its rhythmical use. That is determined solely by whether the first syllable or the second receives the stress. A definition of rhythm, therefore, which thwarts the indisputable habit of Germanic speech, which makes the rhythm of English verse identical with that of Greek verse, seems idle. Its assumption that all rhythm is the same, instead of furthering our interpretation of verse, ignores a difference that we are nevertheless compelled to recognize.

The testimony of our ears, our perception of two modes of rhythm in speech, is confirmed by the histories of literature. These have long described classical Greek verse as quantitative, mediaeval Greek verse as accentual; the verse of Horace and Vergil as quantitative, popular Latin verse of the same period as probably accentual; mediaeval Latin verse, the verse of the great Latin hymns, as accentual. If this distinction of two historical rhythms depends upon a theory of metric, we may revise or abandon it so soon as we revise or explode the theory; but if on the contrary it records a difference in speech itself, we cannot. Now both the Greek and the Latin liturgies¹ of the earlier middle age show a shift to stress rhythm, a change not in the way of explaining rhythm, but of the rhythm itself. Latin stress rhythm, which seems to have been latent in popular verse, was increasingly accepted in the early

¹ Both the facts and the interpretation of them as a change in language itself, independent of any theory of verse, are vouched for by Pierre Aubry in *Le rythme tonique dans le poésie liturgique et dans le chant des églises chrétiennes au moyen âge*, Paris, 1903. To this should be added, for the high middle age, the admirable and equally conclusive introduction to Misset and Aubry's *Les proses d'Adam de St Victor*, Paris, 1900.

Christian centuries, became familiar, finally predominated. The archaic quantitative verse of literary Gaul, and later of the Carolingian literary revival, did not succeed in turning the clock back. Latin verse shifted from time control to stress control. The corresponding shift of the Greek word for rhythmical to signify stress seems to Professor Sonnenschein deplorable. But why was the word thus restricted? In order to distinguish the new rhythm from the old. The answer is confirmed by the mediaeval Latin use of *rhythmus* to distinguish the stress rhythm of the hymns from the ancient time rhythm, which is called *metrum*. Language itself, then, gives evidence for the record that one rhythmical habit gave way to another, that time rhythm waned and stress rhythm came into control. The two verse rhythms are facts of history.

But even those who find Professor Sonnenschein's attempt to reduce all verse rhythm to the single control of time unsatisfying should not find it unfruitful. It enables a wider audience to estimate the evidence of laboratory investigation; and it shows abundantly that stress verse is varied and enriched by recognition of time. For the appeal of verse is not limited to the pattern of its directive rhythm. By moving in new rhythm the Latin hymns did not renounce old harmonies. French verse, moving in time rhythm, adds some of the effects of stress through pitch. English verse recognizes the value of quantity for modulation and variety. Even some metrists need to be reminded that the instrument which they seek to describe has a wide capacity.

For to hear in verse only its rhythm, whether that be of time or of stress, is to cheat oneself. It is like being content to hear only popular music. Popular verse, in both English and mediaeval Latin, by neglecting everything but its rhythm or by exaggerating that, has sometimes lapsed into jolt and jar, has sometimes even sunk into doggerel. Conversely, refined English verse both avoids insistence of stress and uses time among its means of variety. The great exemplar of this is the most learned of English poets, Milton, whom Professor Sonnenschein rightly uses to show effects of time. No less repaying to analysis would be Chaucer; for his awareness of quantity adds harmony to his beautiful freedom.

Dryden's rewriting of Chaucer's verse proceeds partly, indeed, from bad texts, partly from ignorance of Middle English, but largely from what we now perceive to be too narrow a conception

of English verse. Thus doubtless we should read Coleridge's famous preface to *Christabel*. "Counting in each line the accents, not the syllables," though far indeed from being a "new principle" in English verse, was new as against the insufficient metric of the preceding century. It is tantamount to a plea for variety and range. Discerning that our native stress rhythm suffices by itself for the guiding pattern, Coleridge actually opened a wider range than seemed legitimate to Dryden and Pope. Professor Sonnen-schein too seeks a wider metric. He has contributed to this less by his procedure from a dubious definition of rhythm than by his exhibition of English verse harmonies.

CHARLES SEARS BALDWIN

THE JESUIT RELATIONS

THE JESUIT RELATIONS AND ALLIED DOCUMENTS.
Travels and Explorations of the Jesuit Missionaries in
North America (1610-1791). Selected and edited by
Edna Kenton with an introduction by Reuben Gold
Thwaites. 8vo. 527 pages. Albert and Charles
Boni. \$5.

AN important activity of our day is the construction of the American past. This past is, after all, our body. We are exploring it, in order to be able to control it. When we are come so far, we should be able to employ it for ends, let us believe, not altogether of the flesh. Meantime, the "period" plays and novels, and the biographies, which proceed from current presses are a good omen: they are the fuel of so much conscious power in our hand, according as they express the sincere attempt of discovery of the American background. Unfortunately, the smart mode mars a good deal of this matter. We have many "reconstructions" whose aim is to adorn our present foibles with a new filip, rather than to enlarge our present power with more knowledge. We have, however, a few noteworthy pioneers in this wilderness of the American past as yet so slightly blazed by intelligent awareness. And to their company, among whom Mr Brooks, Mr Beer, Mr Bradford, and Mr Werner come at once to mind, we must add the name of Edna Kenton.

Miss Kenton's work, in making one organic volume out of the seventy-tomed and inaccessible chaos of the French Jesuit Relations, is of high importance. She has gone back of the too stressed English beginnings of our world. We are prone, through the constant suggestiveness of language, to forget that the English were late-comers and at first sparse settlers in the American lands. The Spaniard, the Portuguese, the Basque, the Frenchman, and the Hollander shared at first in the magnificent adventure. Here, then, is a book about the French and by the French: a book of their opening of Canada, of their penetration of the Lakes and the

Great Rivers, and of their joining north and south through the vast ideal construction known as Louisiana. Still more are we prone, in the immediate clutter of our industrial system and of the break-down of our spiritual forms, to overlook the great rôle played by religion in America's discovery and in its settling. Columbus remains a shadow, beside the concrete greatness of his deed. We do not know enough that he was a missile—a consciously religious missile—aimed by a fanatically religious Queen. And misconceptions, chiefly of the north (fathered by such formidable men as Pascal¹) have blinded us so well that the work of Catholics in general and of the Society of Jesus in particular, from Quebec to Santa Fe, from Florida to Patagonia, remains quite unacknowledged, not to be sure by the scholars, but in the consciousness of the cultured American world.

Miss Kenton's work is original, because it is well done. She is of course not responsible for the superb translation and printing of the seventy-three volumes of the Relations, under the editorship of Reuben Gold Thwaites, who had completed his task more than twenty years ago. She will be, however, the true author of the currency of this work, heretofore too unwieldy to be read or popularized alone in a narration by Father John J. Wynne, S. J., whose pious particularity has barred his volume from the very audience who needed to know what the Jesuits had given. Miss Kenton, who is of Protestant Quaker birth, has performed a miracle—although it be of the kind there is no church to canonize her for. In one volume, she has succeeded in preserving the essence and in formulating the body of the Jesuit writings. They are a wilderness of letters, reports, entreaties, advices, monographs, and disquisitions ranging for subject from botany to economics, and from ritual to strategy. They were written by the Fathers for the most part in smoky camps, to superiors in Quebec or Paris; and they cover the field from the Mission's birth in 1611 to the banishment of the Society of Jesus from all the realms of the King, a century and a half later. But here, out of this jungle, comes an organic book with prelude, climax, end. Here lives the

¹ I refer, of course, to his *Lettres d'un Provincial*, a great literary work which was as unjust in its philosophical interpretation of Jesuitism as it was astute in the impulse to drive Jesuitism—an alien idea—from France.

spirit of the Fathers in the flesh and colour of their stupendous undertaking. Père Marquette, Père Jogues, and a dozen others are no more empty names. They become living and they become heroes of our story. The camps, the pow-wows, the diplomacies and warfares, the corruptions, martyrdoms, romances of the advancing Conquest take on the plastic reality of art. This book, in the heady language of the Fathers, captures the America in which they roamed and plotted. The forests, the sourceless and mouthless rivers, the oceanic lakes, the clamorous, fluid nations of the Red Man, the loom of distant France are here: above all the transfiguring psyche of America itself, taking these Catholics as in a mythic yesterday it took the natives, working upon the consecrated Fathers until all unknown, through the years, they were French no longer, but Americans also.

The book as it stands has aesthetic being. Plastically, this America lives for us. It is peopled by strange, turbulent races: men of high tension and subtle character: men courteous, generous, savage, cruel, brave: men, indeed, not in essence alien to us. And the Jesuits, giving us these authentic Americans, give us as well themselves! What a company they were! these "adventurous scholars"—have we, perhaps, forgotten for an hour that scholars must be adventurers ere they can grow to be scholars?—practical saints, wise children. They were forerunners of the old world who, in an embrace arduous beyond measure and often unto death, gave the spirit and the forms of Europe for an invisible consummation they did not live to see. Throughout these pages, we watch them transact, so cannily, a mystery beyond them. They are in submission to a power they call God or Christ; but to a process they have no word for. Consciously they labour to baptize the Indian, to increase New France. Actually, they and the Indian and France go down, in a Rite whose outcome we ourselves are now beholding.

So the book is not alone organic: it is an organic nexus, in our cultural need, between ourselves and our past. The origins of America were religious. The shallow geneticisms of psychologic and materialistic doctrine have had their day. It is once more permissible to state that our land was discovered by a mystic mariner; that our soil was baptized by men and women who came to perform

Crusades and to find Sainthood, as well as by indentured servants. The world from Hudson Bay to Córdoba of the Argentine was, for thousands of stammering pioneers, the Word of God. The peculiar forms of their religious vision, being archaic, rotted soon enough. "In God We Trust" found a symbolic haven on a silver coin—the currency of a nation which had transplanted the old world, rather than founded the new. But in this immediate hour, the men and women of America are learning that the spirit of that religious vision did not die: they are learning that the current misery which, so fortunately, undermines our mechanical splendours is precisely the survival of that religious spirit and its want of valid, living forms.

This present religious spirit requires organic contact with the forms of its own American past. Herein lies the significance of the accessible publication of the Jesuit story.

WALDO FRANK

JOHN BURROUGHS VERBATIM

THE LIFE AND LETTERS OF JOHN BURROUGHS. By
Clara Barrus. Illustrated. Two Volumes. 397 and
486 pages. Houghton Mifflin Company. \$12.50.

THE effect of Dr Barrus' careful biography is rather as if she had wished to present the life of John Burroughs in his own words, and even word for word, at least as far as possible. And it seems to have been possible in no inconsiderable degree, for she evidently possessed not only conscience equal to the occasion, but nearly enough material. The tranquil, long, observant days of John Burroughs, though they differed not greatly, one from another, appear to have found liberal record in his journals. Then there was his large correspondence; and, not least, the author's own acquaintance with him, of nearly twenty years standing. Levyng generously from all these sources, the Life has the profusion, the redundancy even, which is characteristic of familiar biography; a redundancy, it is true, which is like life itself, creating in us the strong sense of acquaintance with the man.

But one is obliged to consider whether the story of a man's life, told, as much of this is, in his words of day to day, is so adequate an account of him as it might appear; whether, indeed, we can be satisfied with familiar biography. Familiar biography affords the intimate view, the sense of acquaintance. But intimate views may destroy perspective; and there may be intimate views that mean nothing, or the wrong thing, or only a part of the right thing. Again, a sense of acquaintance may contain the means of understanding, but it is not understanding. Something like this, perhaps, is the case here. Dr Barrus spreads out in great abundance the materials of understanding, but has not attempted any very synthetic understanding, such as would inform the whole of her writing on Burroughs. This would have been well; the biography would thus have gained relief, which it lacks; and correction might have been secured for a slight, but evident and remediable distortion which arises from the view of Burroughs which the quoted journals afford.

He had himself stated an important fact when he had said that his life was in his books. His books were, indeed, the literary presence in which he embodied his emotions, and it was in his emotions that he lived. A history of his personality, therefore, might reasonably take considerable account of his emotions, and of those native gifts, his senses and his temperament, which fed his emotions. This cannot be done without considering his books. Not only is the best evidence of his brilliant senses, his abundant and subtle, if somewhat desultory observation, to be found in his books, but the broad emotional contrast between his essays and his journals furnishes perhaps the most entire view one can get of his hale, but delicate and rather feminine temperament; for the essays, it seems clear, were written at the top, and the journals at the bottom of his daily range of feeling. In the essays we find him full of fresh abounding enjoyment, pouring out his observations, intermingled in tonic phrases with the spice of himself. In the journals we find him after the spices have been shaken out, empty, weary, drooping in a strange ebb of heart, dwelling with profound wistfulness on his memories of the past. Indeed after his fortieth year the quoted journals are so frequently the account of this brooding nostalgia that one must guard against getting from them the impression of a vitality lower and a melancholy greater than was the fact. All they pointed to, really, was a mood frequent with him in the evening, which entirely passed off with the return of morning. Thus neither this picture nor that afforded by the essays would alone be adequate. Together, however, they show truly and fairly both the delicacy of his temperament and its health and tone, for if it was easily exhausted it was as easily replenished.

Because of his susceptibility to emotion and his limited capacity for it, one would like a study of his education in higher relief than is the case here, for it seems evident that his vital education was an instruction of the emotions, in which his chief preceptors were nature, Whitman, and Emerson. But the fact seems to be that the materials of such a study, apparently so abundant, were, after all, meagre. Indeed such questions are likely to be insufficiently answered until the psychological methods of biography are considerably improved.

Of the influence which nature had on him, almost any of his pages seems sufficient testimony; of his debt to Whitman he never

ceased to descend; but one wonders if Emerson, after all, was not as profound an influence as any; was not, indeed, too immense a stimulant. He had remarked that Emerson was his spiritual father; and he has pages, even essays, in which he seems little more than the son of his father. Perhaps it is fair to say that although he learned a great deal from such rich and various masters—all, in fact, that made him what he was—he did not learn (perhaps none of them could teach him) to be in any strict sense a thinker. Notwithstanding his excursions into science and philosophy, notwithstanding his passion for truth, it does not appear that he was a conspicuous master of inference. "I can write what I feel," he had said, "and only what I feel." And in fact he seemed not to have very definite notions of the organization of ideas, or the furtherance of thought by logic. What he did learn apparently, was not how to think, but rather how to feel with his mind, feel originally and soundly.

If this was, as it seems to be, nearly the sum of his effective culture, it yet had a rich reality. He was nothing if not genuine; even his Emersonisms were his own in the sense that he was fully possessed by the feeling which they stated. He wrote, in a way, simply by description of true things, which he drew from inexhaustible and explicit memories, memories he was always accumulating in endlessly pleased observation of the creatures and events of wood and field. Yet he did not write like a naturalist; his great theme was the enjoyment of nature; and on that subject he was something of an outdoor Addison. Even here, however, in his own authentic demesne, he took unusual precautions to be exactly himself; he was uneasy with subjects, even those well adapted to him, which were not of his own choosing; he would attempt nothing that was not visibly within his powers. And while, like so many who depend much upon feeling, he did not perhaps succeed in enlarging the area of his first originality—sometimes not escaping vacuity when he made the attempt—it is also true that when he repeated himself within the bounds of that first emotional mastery, he could do it without redundancy. There were always the qualities of youth about such repetition; the airs of April rose unfailingly from such pages.

The biography is at its best in certain passages dealing with his maturity, when he had to some degree decided the limits of his

originality, and had settled down within them to the husbandry of his talents. These sections are livelier than other parts of the book, and have much less the effect of verbatim chronicles. The author drew to excellent purpose on her own impressions; and while one cannot but think that modern biography should employ a more succinct and synthetic method than she uses, yet these familiar scenes of the characteristic Burroughs—in the bark study at Riverby, or in the placid plebeian solitude of Slabsides, with his dog, Nip, and his much too ornithological cat, Silly Sally, or in the hay-barn study at Roxbury—such pictures are their own warrant. They show him full of his true concerns, contented but alert, occasionally peevish, occasionally elevated, occasionally wistful; and though always realistic, always a much moved student of the mother of everything.

CHARLES K. TRUEBLOOD

AN AMERICAN TRAGEDY

AN AMERICAN TRAGEDY. By Theodore Dreiser.
Two volumes. 12mo. 830 pages. Boni and
Liveright. \$5.

THE fact that Theodore Dreiser's new novel seems likely to leave many readers repulsed and many critics confounded does not detract from its value. Its cold Acherontic flood pursues its way, owing little, if anything, to the human qualities that disarm, endear, or beguile, owing nothing to the specious intellectual catchwords of the hour. The pleasure to be derived from it is grim, stark, austere, a purely aesthetic pleasure, unpropitious to such as require human cajolery in these high matters.

To use the expression "objective" with regard to it is only illuminating if what one means is that the writer's energy is so powerful that his vision of things is projected to a certain distance from himself; to such a distance, in fact, that there are no trailing and bleeding fringes left to tug at his vitals or to hinder him from taking up his load and going on his way. In this sense the book is certainly a planetary projectile. It lives, if it lives at all, by its own revolution on its own axis. Its creator has written no *apologia*, no consolatory interpretation, on the sky of its orbit.

But what chasms and crevasses, what dark cavities worse than lunar craters, have we to enter, in order to geologize and botanize among the lava-cracks and the grey mosses of this scarcely congealed metallic microcosm! One reads somewhere that certain aborigines of North America used to murmur of mysterious presences they named *manitou*, *wakanda*, *orenda*. The Bantu Africans whisper too of an invisible essence called *mulungu*. These primordial emanations do not appear to have been exactly divine or exactly diabolic. Rather do they present themselves as diffused magnetic dispersions, thrown off by the motions of primal Matter, as it stirs in its sleep, groping forward from the inanimate towards the organic. Some such *orenda*, some such *mulungu* seems to be the motive force and indeed the subject-matter of An American Tragedy; only in this case the mysterious effluence is given off

rather by psychic than by physical forces. But to catch, out of the "palpable obscure," these secret stirrings and to follow them in their furtive motions a writer has to break many rules of language.

Perhaps the *Introibo ad altare* of any scrupulous initiation into the Dreiserian cult is to put one's finger upon the "blind mouth" of the historical method and wash one's hands clean of all rules, standards, conformities, traditions.

An American Tragedy certainly justifies its title. It is not merely American in its external stage-sets and the superficial idiosyncrasies of its characters. Plenty of American novels offer these allurements and yet remain as much afloat and deracinated as drifting seaweed. This extraordinary creation is American in its bones and blood and entrails. It is American in the heave of its breath, in the swing of its stride, in the smoke of its nostrils. Its Atlantean shoulders are American; so are its portentous buttocks. Its solemn wink, its shameless yawn, its outstretched, nonchalant limbs, all betray the sardonic sentiment, the naïve brutality, the adamantine stoicism of that organized chaos whose event is "in the hands of God."

The greatness of this work lies in the fact, among other things, that it covers so much ground. Some of the most arresting of Mr Dreiser's contemporaries are vigorous and convincing enough when on their own particular native soil. But where these "localists" lose their plumage is when they leave home and like all ill-advised migratory birds settle and chatter upon alien rooftops. No one except Dreiser seems strong enough to swallow the whole chaotic spectacle and to disgorge it into some form of digested brain-stuff. His alone is the sprawl and the clutch, his alone the gullet and the stomach, competent to make away with such a cantle! On their own immediate ground these other writers can be suggestive enough. Off their ground they are nothing at all. But to be off the American of Dreiser's saturation you would have to take ship; and even then you would be miles out at sea ere that voice of Polyphemus fell upon silence or that Cyclopean eye, along with the light-ship of Sandy Hook and the search-light of Alcatraz, sank below the horizon!

An American Tragedy begins in Kansas City, the geographical navel of the land, moves thence to upper New York State, and terminates with the execution of its hero in Sing-Sing; but the

psychic chemistry, of which it captures the *mulungu*, has its body and pressure in every portion of this country, and needs no map nor chart. This would hardly have been the case had what interested Dreiser most been those particular idiosyncrasies of our common nature that require a local habitation for their richest efflorescence. His Ygdrasil, his occult World-Ash-Tree, straddles its roots from coast to coast; finds nourishment as easily from the sands of Arizona, as from the red soil of the Carolinas; and it can do this because its roots are not really in the earth at all but in a vast diffused life-illusion, rising up like a thick mist out of a multitude of defrauded souls. This accounts for the fact that *An American Tragedy* is so lacking in what is soothing and healing to the mind, so sombrely naked of the kind of charm which pastures upon old usages, grows sweet and mellow upon the milk of ancient fields. Bell-hops, store-keepers, drummers, lawyers, sheriffs, politicians, factory-owners, factory-managers, factory-hands, stenographers, policemen, ministers, waiters, crooks, doctors, newspaper-men; all these, together with their counterparts in the residential sections, are perpetually throwing off, from Portland, Oregon to Portland, Maine, from Duluth to Miami, a cloud of invisible eidola, airy images of their grosser desires; and these are the filmy bricks of which Dreiser builds his impregnable dream-world.

It needs something thaumaturgic in a writer to enable him to separate this *mulungu* of accumulated life-illusions from the rest of the cosmic spectacle. But what Dreiser has done is nothing less than this; and we are compelled to accept as reality the "grim feature" thus starkly presented; although we cry to it in our dismay—"Hence, horrible shadow, unreal mockery, hence!" For it is as if, in Dreiser's work, *America itself*—the "commensurate antagonist" of the old civilizations—*saw itself* for the first time; cast a sly, shrewd, exultant, inquisitive look at itself; and turned away with a sardonic shrug.

Why is it that agriculturists and sea-faring people play so small a part in Dreiser's books, though both Witla in *The Genius* and Clyde in this story find their friendliest sweethearts in a farmhouse? Is it not because the doom is on him to recreate just that particular life-dream which cannot co-exist with any close contact with earth or sea? The traditions of earth-life and sea-life surround the persons committed to them with all manner of magical

encrustations such as have the power to reject and ward off that garish hubbub, that crude hurly-burly, of an existence dominated by "modern improvements."

The very fatality of this spectacle, as Dreiser half discovers and half creates it, is something that sets its rhinocerus-horn, rampantly and blindly against all that is quaint, delicate, subtle in human nature. And yet throughout those scenes in the Kansas City hotel, throughout the coarse duplicities of the boy's first infatuation, throughout the scatter-brained jovialities in brothel, wine-shop, and automobile, throughout the rough-and-tumble on the frozen river—so like a picture by Teniers or Jan Steen—throughout these pathetic struggles of Clyde and Roberta to outwit the vulgar respectability of Lycurgus, New York, one grows increasingly conscious that, rank and raw as it all is, there is something in the relentless and terrible *gusto* of the author's relish for what he is about which rises to the height of a monstrous sublimity.

It seems a strange use of the word "realistic" to apply it to this stupendous objectification of the phantasmal life-dreams of so many tin-tack automatons of a bastard modernity; but when one grows aware how Dreiser's own Deucalion-like mind murmurs, weeps, laughs, and gropes among them, a queer oppression catches at the throat and a kind of grim hypnosis—as if a beast-tamer were luring us into his cage of snouts and tails and hungry non-human eyes—makes us almost ready to cry out, in kindred delusion, "It's the truth! It's the truth!"

An American Tragedy is the other side of the shield of that "plain democratic world" whereof Walt Whitman chanted his dithyrambic acceptance. And we may note that just as Whitman took ordinary human words and made them porous to his transcendent exultations, so Dreiser has invented a style of his own, for this monody over the misbegotten, which is like nothing else in literature. I think it is a critical mistake to treat this Dreiserian style as if it were a kind of unconscious blundering. If it is unconscious it certainly could find a very sophisticated defence; for who is not aware to-day of many recondite craftsmen who make use of the non-grammatical, the non-rational, and even of the nonsensical, to most refined aesthetic results?

It is much easier to call Dreiser naïve than to sound the depths of the sly, huge, subterranean impulses that shape his unpolished

runes. The rough scales and horny excrescences of the style of *An American Tragedy* may turn out to be quite as integral a part of its author's spiritual skin as are the stripes and spots and feathered crests of his more ingratiating contemporaries.

The subject of the book, this tragedy that gathers and mounts and accumulates till it wrecks the lives involved, is the tragedy of perverted self-realization, the mistaking of the worse shadow for the better. All are shadows; but the art of life is still in its infancy when we make the mistake that this poor Clyde Griffiths made. But, after all, such in its own day and place was the tragedy of Macbeth; such, with yet insaner convolutions, the tragedy of Raskolnikoff. One has to take refuge in a different world altogether, in a world that has vanished with the philosophy of the ancients, to find an ignoble mistake of this kind unworthy of the ritual of Dionysus. Certain it is that with the exception of the unfortunate Roberta, not a character in this book wins our deeper sympathy. Clyde is pitiable, if we renounce all craving for mental and moral subtleties, but we pity him as we would pity a helpless vicious animal driven to the slaughter-house, not as we pity a fully conscious human intellect wrestling with an untoward fate. And yet the book produces a sense of awe, of sad humility, of troubled wonder. How has this been achieved?

No one but Dreiser, as far as I know, could take a set of ragamuffin bell-hops, scurvy editors, tatterdemalion lawyers, greedy department-store wenches, feather-weight society chits, "heads without name, no more rememberéd than summer flies," could thrust into the midst of these people an ill-starred, good-looking weakling like Clyde; and then, out of such material—surely more uninspiring than have ever been selected by the brain of man or artist—set up a colossal brazen-ribbed image, which the very wild geese, in their flight over the cities of men, must suppose to be fathom-based upon reality!

To taste the full flavour, the terrible "organic chemical" flavour, like the smell of a stock-yard, which emanates from this weird book, it is necessary to feel, as Dreiser seems to feel—and, indeed, as we are taught by the faith of our fathers—that the soul of the most ill-conditioned and raw-sensed of our race, gendered by man, born of woman, has a potentiality of suffering equal with the noblest.

Thus in place of the world we know there rises up before us Something towering and toppling and ashen-grey, a very *Balaena Mysticetus* of the abyss, riddled with devouring slime-worms. And we ourselves, so great is this writer's power, become such worms. It is a formidable achievement, the creation of this "empathy," this more than sympathy, in the case of such unfortunates; and to have brought it about is, say what you please, a spiritual as well as an aesthetic triumph. To watch the death-hunt of the faltering Clyde is to watch a fox-hunt in the company of some primordial Fox-god, who knows as you cannot know, both the ecstasy of stealing into the hen-roost and *what it is* to feel the hot breath of the hounds following your flying tail!

Balzac used to throw his protean magnetism into the urge of the most opposite obsessions, becoming sometimes an angel and sometimes a demon; but Dreiser does something different from this. He overshadows his herd of hypnotized cattle in the totality of their most meagre and petering-out reactions, meditating upon them in an ubiquitous contemplation that resembles the trance of some "astral body" of iron and steel and paving-stone, some huge impalpable soul of the inanimate, yearning in sombre tenderness over its luckless children. And yet it is not really out of the elements of the earth that Dreiser—moving like some vast shepherd of Jotunheim-flocks, among his rams and ewes—erects his sorrowful sheep-fold, but rather out of the immaterial hurdles and straw of their own turnip-tasting dreams.

The portion of the story that deals with the murder itself is so imaginatively heightened as to cast a Janus-like shadow backwards and forwards over the rest of the book. What the boy sees and hears as he sits in the train that is bearing him towards his victim; the "supernatural soliciting" that calls to him out of the air; the spasm of panic-stricken weakness that distorts his purpose at the supreme moment; his convoluted doubts, after the event, as to his actual guilt; these passages, like the dark waters of the lake where the girl is drowned, possess so much poetic porousness and transparency that they make the earlier and later portions of the work seem like an opaque face, of which they are the living and expressive eye.

Dreiser has always been a mystic. Only a mystic could capture the peculiar terror of *Matter become a ghost to the mind*, as he

captures it, so as to be a veritable confederate with the Chthonian divinities. Only a mystic could ponder so obstinately upon the wretched pulse-beats of a scamp like Clyde, till they respond to the rumble of Erebus, till they rise and sink in ghastly reciprocity with the shadow-voices of Typhon, of Loki, of Azazel, of Ahriman!

We can protest—and here, as I pen these lines in the very hotel where Clyde served his transients, I do most heartily protest—that there are aspects of human nature entirely obliterated from this gregarious shadow-dance. But such protests must conform to aesthetic intelligence. An American Tragedy is the tragedy of only such aspects of mortal consciousness as can get themselves objectified in such a psychic panorama. An artist, a mystic, a prophet if you will, must be allowed to *isolate his phenomena*. Dreiser's phenomena are not lacking in their own inherent contrasts. Compare the letters of Roberta, for example, so poignant as to be almost intolerable, with the baby-talk in the letters of Sondra, so intolerable for the very opposite reason! Sondra is one stage further removed from nature than Roberta; but the genuineness of her infatuation for Clyde is not lost in her queer jargon. Infatuated young persons, of both sexes, do babble in this unpleasant way when they are devoid of all critical alter-egoism. Like some gigantic naturalist studying the twitchings and turnings of a crowd of shimmery-winged dung-beetles Dreiser has been put to it to invent human sounds such as shall represent the love-cries and the panic-cries of these husks of inane rapacity.

Had any of his rampaging bell-hops, his crafty lawyers, his sly department-store ladies, his bouncing society-chits, shown too marked a tendency to emerge into a more appealing stratum of consciousness, a certain formidable unity of "timbre" would have been lost to the book, a consistency of rhythm broken, a necessary pressure removed. Composed of everything that prods, scrapes, rakes, harrows, and outrages an intelligent organism the environment, to which these creatures of Dreiser's contemplation respond, itself mingles with their lamentable response. It is out of this appalling reciprocity of raw with raw, that the mass and weight and volume of the book proceed. And this accumulated weight—so terribly mortis'd and tenon'd by its creator's genius—has its own unparalleled beauty, as pure an aesthetic beauty (almost mathematical in the rigidity of its pattern) as the most purged and

exacting taste could demand. Thus is brought about through the mediumship of this omophagous intellect, the only escape from the impact of a certain horrible dream-world which a lost soul can find; the escape, namely, of giving to the Chimaera itself the lineaments of a work of art. To the unhappy wretch by the wayside whom Zarathustra found with a snake in his gullet was uttered the magic formula—"Bite and spit!" This is what Theodore Dreiser has done; and the result is *An American Tragedy*.

In *Plays Natural and Supernatural* this same author bestowed an articulate voice upon that thundering ox-bellow of the American Locomotive (so different from the thin whistles of European trains) which, reverberating across a continent, sounds the modern tragic chorus to so many broken-hearted vigils. In this same book there reaches the brain of a patient under laughing-gas a monstrous voice, repeating the syllable Om! Om! Om!

Such, it seems to me—that moan of the freight-train as you hear it in the night and that *other sound* which few have the ears to hear—is the only adequate commentary that can be made upon the temptation and crime and punishment of Clyde Griffiths, bell-hop of Kansas City! Not for nothing has this unique book gathered itself about the mystery of evil.

Every imaginative writer is doomed sooner or later to become a scape-goat; doomed to take upon himself, in a strange occult fashion, "the Sins of the World." And as one ponders upon the figure of Dreiser, moving in sombre *bonhomie*, humming and drumming, across the literary arena, one cannot fail to note that he also has had to balance that pack upon his shoulders.

His vision of things blames no one, lets no one off, reduces all "benevolence and righteousness" to sorrowful humility; pitiful, patient, dumb. For at the back of the world, as he sees it, is neither a Devil nor a Redeemer; only a featureless *mulungu*, that murmurs forever "Om! Om! Om!"

JOHN COWPER POWYS

BRIEFER MENTION

JONAH, by Robert Nathan (12mo, 212 pages; McBride: \$2) would—if the heart had been kept out of it—be sparkling satire; would—if the head had played less of a part—be delicate allegory. As it stands, it is better than either, for it has, as one says of mergers, retained the best features of both. Mr Nathan has done a great deal more than clothe the biblical story in garments of modern prose; he has filled the legend with an elusive irony, and retold it with a philosophic twinkle which is too suave to be termed wit. Beneath the surface of his tranquil pages, one discerns cool, dark depths of thought.

THE SUTTON PAPERS, by Selwyn Jepson (12mo, 273 pages; Lincoln MacVeagh, Dial Press: \$2). The special accent that comes over from London nowadays affects even the detective stories; and *The Sutton Papers*, if not by Mr Huxley himself, might have been written by one of his friends. The pleasant end of London, with its clubs and shops and good restaurants, comes sharply into view as the tale unfolds; and the hero and heroine, though as smart as possible and quite all right, do the oddest imaginable things, and win out to a satisfactory marriage in spite of the machinations of a titled villain.

CHRISTINA ALBERTA'S FATHER, by H. G. Wells (12mo, 401 pages; Macmillan: \$2.50) begins by giving the reader the exhilarating assurance that Wells can, at will, write another *Mr Polly* and ends by proving that he does not want to. If the reader cares more for *Polly-Wells* than for the *Wells* of *The Outline*, and of *God, The Invisible King*, he will be disappointed; even so, he will feel the enormous gusto and fervour of Wells in giving form to his ideas. There is a strange touch of melodrama in the book and the expressing of ideas through and by the characters is not perfect. The launching of *Mr Preemby*, both into the book and into his adventure as *Sargon the Magnificent*, is done in the best of the old manner. The rest is argument.

PETER VACUUM, by Anthony Gibbs (12mo, 329 pages; Lincoln MacVeagh, Dial Press: \$2). The Gibbs writing fraternity has been augmented by a confident recruit from the younger generation, making up the fourth hand of a literary foursome. The son of Sir Philip is somewhat inclined to overbid his hand, nor does he hesitate to trump the ace of sincerity with the two-spot of flippancy. He has taken the stock novel of American undergraduate life and given it an Oxford degree, rendering it perhaps more sophisticated but certainly no more substantial. The self-consciousness of his style is inescapable; its quality is sufficiently mirrored in the following extract: "A complex is a nasty, new-fangled thing. Neurotic novelists and nicotining neurasthenics have fed upon this beastly brain-child of a diseased mentality, and, feeding on it, have waxed insanitarily fat, like filthy fungoids on a rotting root."

CARAVAN, by Witter Bynner (12mo, 77 pages; Knopf: \$1.50). Mr Bynner's latest volume bears evidence of the diversity of his gifts without many examples of their highest application. Of the longer poems, *A Dance for Rain* is undoubtedly the finest. The imagery of this poem is beautifully clear and is merely, as it should be, the visible sign of the more important idea. Paul Thévenaz is also impressive, though the last stanza loses power by a shift to the epigrammatic style. Yet merely as an epigrammatist, Mr Bynner is often at his best. *She Slept Like a Lady* is a pleasant and successful example of this form in the Cavalier mood. By far the most memorable poem in the book, because the simplest, is *A Good-bye from Shipboard*.

THE PRINCE OF WALES AND OTHER FAMOUS AMERICANS, by Miguel Covarrubias (8vo, 66 drawings; Knopf: \$3) is a smart name for a book of caricatures which do not possess and do not need smartness as a recommendation. The exigencies of publication made Covarrubias do most of his work in line, whereas most of his best work is done in wash and in colour, as the scattered examples of these media in the present collection amply prove. Certain of the caricatures have the quality of making you reject them as libels which have nothing to do with the persons attacked; remembering them, and meeting these persons, the penetration and justice of Covarrubias are at once rendered beyond question. The sketches of burlesque artists and of negro dancers recently shown at the Dudensing Galleries are excellent; and occasionally when not drawing from life, as in the Picasso, he shows a neat literary wit—a type he gets along without entirely in his usual caricatures, avoiding comparisons with other masters—comparisons which, as it happens, he could well afford to stand.

The merit of **HOWARD PYLE, A Chronicle**, by Charles D. Abbott with introduction by N. C. Wyeth (illus., 8vo, 249 pages; Harper: \$5) lies in the revelation which is accomplished simply by selections from Howard Pyle's lifelong and copious correspondence; for the self-effacing narrative is but the required frame for these letters. Indeed, in the quotation alone of his sincere, rational, and ardent words we have a series of portraits, almost an autobiography, in which we can to some degree follow the growth of his prolific talents. The numerous illustrations, including several in colour, are, with the exception of his murals, representative of the whole range of his work.

EXPERIMENTS, by Norman Douglas (10mo, 264 pages; McBride: \$2.50). The growing reputation of Mr Norman Douglas will not benefit from Mr Norman Douglas' latest volume. The title is misleading. These *disjecta membra* of old newspaper wars are not so much experiments as they are reprinted magazine-fodder, done, needless to say, with a technique which, though not novel, is superior and racy. One or two essays in the art of fiction reveal once more the sad fact that the author of *South Wind* is not at ease in this field, nor is the creative faculty among those gifts bestowed upon him by the gods in whom he so ferociously disbelieves.

A LIFETIME WITH MARK TWAIN, by Mary Lawton (8vo, 362 pages; Harcourt, Brace: \$3.50). This is a garrulous account of a domestic servant's adoring attendance upon the family of Mark Twain, faithfully set down by a friend of the family who spares the reader none of Kate Leary's repetitions. It is, in consequence, rather a treatise upon the servant question than upon the literary life and the not-unfamiliar moral seems to be that good masters get good servants.

JOAN OF ARC, MAID OF FRANCE, by Albert Bigelow Paine (illus., 2 vols., 8vo, 746 pages; Macmillan: \$10.50) is a biography strictly, and one with character. While it is illuminated with the enthusiasm which the author says had been kindled thirty years ago by Mark Twain's romance, that enthusiasm has been confined to elucidation of the actual Joan, so far as she is manifested in the record of her own words, and in the corroborated testimony of contemporary witnesses. The author laboured four years, he tells us, to secure the facts, and has endeavored to present them "without bias, and without neglect." The result, while not a manifest triumph in point of style, produces the sense of an historic presence, which is not so often achieved, and which usually vanishes with the slightest attempt at *bravura*.

MADAME RÉCAMIER, by Edouard Herriot (8vo, Vol. I, 320 pages; Vol. II, 460 pages; Boni & Liveright: \$7.50) is a most valuable biography, the story of a lovely woman, to whom it is meet and right that we should pay homage. Mr Herriot's art is the art of Suetonius. Colour, mystery, and adoration surround his heroine. Was the life of this beautiful Juliette a happy one? Perhaps she was happy at the Abbaye-aux-Bois, where her bedroom was ornamented with a bookcase, a harp, the portrait of Mme de Staël, and a view of Coppet by moonlight! Through her excessive loving-kindness had led her into several heresies, the good Father Morcel whose manners were untainted by the world did not hesitate to give her absolution.

REFLECTIONS ON THE DEATH OF A PORCUPINE, by D. H. Lawrence (10mo, 240 pages; Centaur Press: \$4). The most important in this latest collection of Mr Lawrence's essays is entitled *The Crown* and was first written in 1915. In it there are passages of a deep and penetrating beauty, burning with intensity, rich in imagery, and fecund in philosophic suggestion. It is only in certain instances where this cantankerous author steps from prophecy to admonition that a vulgarity unprecedented and phenomenal mars his pages. Indeed one searches all literature in vain for another instance of a writer capable of combining such authentic inspiration with such townsman's impertinences. However, at its best Mr Lawrence's imagination is powerful and poetic enough to break through the narrow confines of our walled-in days and to show us in a series of incandescent flashes life at its source intractable, quivering, luminous. *The Crown* is of all Mr Lawrence's semi-mystical and philosophical writing the most poetically sustained and restores one's faith in his singular and eccentric genius.

THE HOGARTH ESSAYS: A SHORT VIEW OF RUSSIA, by John Maynard Keynes (10mo, 28 pages; The Hogarth Press: 2 /) is a keen bit of interpretation, a revealing study of Russian revolutionism at home—of its counterparts, and its influence upon modern thought at large. In discussing Leninism, here labelled a combination of religion and business, Mr Keynes says the religion is a new variant, and the business highly inefficient, the methods of both being terrible. Trotzky and his successors proclaimed their working creed as material and anti-religious, but this does not deflect Mr Keynes's vision from the Russian movement as a persecuting, missionary faith combined with experimental economics. Money-making as a profession is being done away with, says Mr Keynes, and a new working for the community is being substituted. Old Russia was, as new Russia is, stupid and cruel, he concludes; nothing could emerge from the stupidity of the former, some minute particle of the ideal may lie hidden in the new.

MURDER PIRACY AND TREASON, A Selection of Notable English Trials, by Raymond Postgate (12mo, 254 pages; Houghton Mifflin: \$2.50) is an urbane account of sixteen criminal trials, selected partly in reference to their social and historical background, partly for their interest in themselves. The first is a trial by combat under Richard II; the last is the strange history of Charles Peace, that elderly gentleman of refined tastes who revered Queen Victoria and devoted his nights to robbery and murder.

AMERICANA, 1925, edited by H. L. Mencken (12mo, 311 pages; Knopf: \$2.50) is an almost incredible collection of the follies, stupidities, crassnesses, malices, blunderings, and fatuities of the American people as they find their way into the press of all the States. They are the pick of the collections which appear each month in *The American Mercury* under the same title; they are obviously genuine. They tell of the people who sit at their windows and count the motor cars that pass and of those who do Bible "marathons" and commit lynchings and otherwise declare the glories of God. In an entertaining appendix (professedly compiled for English readers) Mencken is at his best in summary analyses of the character of each of the States, and is surprisingly unwitty in a lexicon of the Americanisms used. Those with intelligence enough to know that *Americana* is not America will find it an indispensable book; even the others will know that it is vastly entertaining.

SCIENCE AND THE MODERN WORLD, by A. N. Whitehead (12mo, 296 pages; Macmillan: \$3) is a study of the changing attitudes towards science from the ancient world up to our own day, and of the effect of these attitudes on the life and thought of the various epochs touched upon. Mr Whitehead is a scholar, philosopher, and historian rather than a scientist or psychologist in the very modern sense. But no matter how much one may disagree with certain of his observations and concluding judgements, one cannot read this interesting and stimulating book without experiencing a heightening of sensibility and an enrichment of knowledge.

THE THEATRE

A MONG the minor amusements of a nation so wealthy that it can afford to ignore things priceless, a country so large that it cannot become aware either of its greatest living painter, Marin, or of its only living sculptor, Lachaise, we observe a highly systematised smuggling-in of various brands of aesthetic "kick"—some authentic, more diluted, most neither, but each and all enticingly labeled. Whatever may be the cause of this dishonourable predicament, the fact remains that every American, whom bootleg Art confronts, is at liberty to make one of precisely three moves. First, he may refuse to partake of the proffered intoxicant, on the ground that such indulgence were unconstitutional (not to mention expensive); second, he may discerningly partake thereof, scorning neither his own wits nor those of his stomach; third, he may knowingly glance at the label, shut tightly both eyes, and gulperdown. The inhabitants of New York City, U. S. A., who are justly famous for their thirst, made the abovementioned choice only recently, when Messrs Comstock & Gest (Art bootleggers of the *première* water) let it be known that they had "the Great Honor of Presenting For the First Time in America" a peculiarly hyperfine brand of "Synthetic Theatre," which not only had arrived direct from the former home of vodka, but wore the super-alluring label: NEMIROVITCH-DANTCHENKO. Whereupon the present writer, remembering that bootleg Art (like the "little girl who had a little curl") is very very good when it's good but when it's bad it's horrid, put wits, dollars, et cetera suddenly together and sampled this latest miracle gradually. Having done so, he takes great pleasure in announcing, not merely that he is undead, but that he is considerably more alive than before—a situation so perfectly remarkable as to merit analysis.

One might suppose (were one to believe what one hears) that the technique of The Moscow Art Theatre Musical Studio resembled the technique of some recently invented cocktail; that a thorough, if not positively savage, shaking-up of various in themselves merely dangerous aesthetic ingredients produced a taste suggestive of none, assuming the concoction to have been properly

gulped, plus a kick beyond dynamite. Actually, however, the system of Nemirovitch-Dantchenko suggests that almost incredibly skilful edifice, familiar to American preprohibition imbibers under the salubrious pseudonym "pussy café," which presents itself to the eye as a number of colours or succession of layers, each constituent layer or colour (obedient to the law of specific gravities) keeping its particular level and refusing to blend or mix with the others—whereof the gustatory pleasure results from an interaction, on the tongue, of stories, as the edifice unrapidly is sipped. If New York postprohibition audiences gulped the Synthetic Theatre, if the whole thing looked like cocktail to them, if they approved because the gin apparently had been killed since the ugly taste of conventional Opera was absent, and if they disapproved because they didn't get the kick which they expected to get out of a shaking-up, by the gentleman with the hyphenated nomenclature, of various arts—it luxuriously is true that there was no gin, and that the aforesaid gentleman had not shaken up arts for the exuberant reason that he had done something exactly different, videlicet, he had made visible a law, he had demonstrated an aesthetic relativity, he had "produced" an homogeneity of arts precisely by not violating the discreteness of any one of them.

What happens on this gentleman's stage is a selfimposing nextness of arts, what happens in his audience (supposing the inhabitants of Jolson's Theatre to constitute his audience) is an overlapping or interpenetration of arts. The law governing each specimen of his "Lyric Drama" is an aesthetic law, i.e., in each instance, various arts, illustrating a certain order, cohere through the differences of their common volition (so to speak)—the principle at stake being not an agglomeration of ingredients but that spontaneous sequence of elements which inevitably is the expression of their respective densities. This out-of-Spontaneous-by-Inevitably idiom or audience-stage structure involves, before anything else, the existence of a mobile theatre. More accurately: it involves the elimination of a pennyintheslot peepshow parlour and the substitution therefor of an aesthetic continent, throughout whose roamble depth and height and breadth the tourist pays his way in -ist currency ("constructivist" or "expressionist" or what you will setting, lighting, costuming)—said currency being amply protected against depreciation, thanks to the seizure of that long-idle inexhaustible treasure: the chorus.

We shall inflict upon our readers neither a diary nor a geography of those portions of The Lyric Theatre (*LYSISTRATA*, *LOVE AND DEATH*, *CARMENCITA*) which it already has been our privilege to tour. Instead we shall remark that, as in the case of any authentic experiment, there is here not much failure and much invincibility. To be sure, The Moscow Art Theatre Musical Studio has its anecdotal feebleness in *ALEKO* (with too many not thick enough sounds attributed to Sergei Rachmaninoff), but it has its found solidity in *CLEOPATRA* (with the unspeakingly supreme protagonist "FLAVIUS—A Roman Warrior"), in *CARMENCITA* (with an exquisitely orchestrated *ἀνάγκη* of fans), and—best of all—in the immaculate roughhouse happeningly enclosed by *LYSISTRATA*. An exhibition of a different sort, of the cocktail variety in fact—the Quinn collection of modern art—reveals a total absence of Lachaise, many merely fifteenth-rate things, and a fatuous sought negligible unthing by Augustus John, but also a structurally sumptuous irrevocably itselfcoloured vibration by John Marin. And of whatever failures in taste the late Mr Quinn or the living Nemirovitch-Dantchenko may be accused, these failures are honourable—unlike the failure which results when Miss Eva Le Gallienne and an equally incompetent cast "do" what, instead of being *THE MASTER BUILDER*, becomes a rigid mess vividly lighted by Emily Stevens' superbly *réussi* penetration of *Hedda Gabler*.

And now may we suggest some genuine home-brew?

Neither the presence of *LYSISTRATA*, nor the absence, from the Musical Studio productions, of music by the greatest living composer (whose *Sacre* and *Noces*, alone and as Nijinska-Goncharova ballets, are equal in intensity to anything for which Nemirovitch-Dantchenko or Ibsen or any one else can possibly be responsible), nor even the luminous existence of a Strindberg *DREAM PLAY* at the Provincetown, chances to account for your humble servant's *naïf* idea that the *NATIONAL WINTER GARDEN BURLESK* at the corner of East Houston Street and Second Avenue is a singularly fundamental institution, whose Scratch is a noble clown, whose first wink is worth the struttings of a hundred thousand Barrymores, who are the unmitigated bunk: since the direction of all spectacle lives in Aristophanes and the "theatre" has a great future behind it, said "future" being The Circus.

E. E. CUMMINGS

MODERN ART

THE European competition for New York favour is keener this winter than at any time since the war. What are known as "international" shows are thick. The Italians sent us—I believe for the first time—a presumably representative collection of work by their own favourites. The Tri-National, a travelling exhibition sponsored by Mrs Harriman in the hope of aiding the British, French, and American artists to know each other better, created a genuine stir in New York after failing to create one in Paris. The Carnegie International, of Pittsburgh, which has been the only effort on a large scale at reciprocity during the recent lean years, has now extended its scope, and intends to show its foreign contributions at the Grand Central Galleries shortly. The Spaniards, with true grandee indifference, have not attempted nationally a contact with the acknowledged money centre of the world, but two individual shows by the late Sorolla and the living Mezquita clamoured for attention in the midst of the hubbub of the world congress, so the would-be world students feel that they know most of what is now going on and have saved the price of an ocean passage this summer. Why go to the mountain when the mountain is so willing to come to us?

International exhibitions, as those who have assisted in getting them up know only too well, are farther from perfection than most of man's inventions. The fates have piled up so many reasons why first-rate pictures must never be sent abroad—reluctant owners, the desire to sell nearer home, et cetera—that the faint-hearted imagine that God objects to cosmopolitanism in art, though nothing has as yet been found in Holy Writ that warrants the opinion. The organizers of these affairs are not only not faint-hearted but wholly incurious as to the propriety of having the Lion (Great Britain) and the Lamb (Us) lie down together in this cosmopolitan fashion. Lamb? What is our animal? Can we be lambs? At any rate, lambs though we be, the danger to our *amours-propres* does not appear to reside in that lion but in the French rooster, who stalks about with such a superior air that the rest of us feel cheap. It is not news to say that the French lead

the modern world in art. That fact was borne in upon all the un-French long ago. But international exhibitions being what they are, it is perhaps news to state that, in spite of the contrary winds that fret these enterprises, French art has risen to its lawful state in all of them this year. Even in the Carnegie International the French at last take something like their rightful place at the head of the list. This is not to say that officialdom has reformed. That would indeed be too much like the millennium. Officials are as slow-moving, as tied to their academies, as ever they were, but they are continually being prodded by the dealers, and by such things as this Tri-National already mentioned, and however reluctantly they yield points, are, nevertheless, obliged to march.

The Tri-National really was a fine show. People came in crowds, looked at every picture in every corner, and seemed distinctly impressed. It was an unmistakable triumph for the modern men. The derisive outcries of ten years ago were no longer heard. The very best members of the community, the sort who pride themselves upon having correct opinions upon art, went about in a reverend manner. In fact the revering was overdone, and it is apparent that modern art has now reached the stage when it must be protected from its friends rather than from its enemies. In the meantime it can be stated that Braque and Matisse, Picasso, Maillol, and Juan Gris were never better represented in New York than in the Tri-National. The collection, it seems, had greatly improved upon what it showed in Paris by some discreet New York borrowings. The splendid panel by Picasso, a masterpiece of abstract art, was lent by a New York owner, and though I must have seen it before, I felt I was seeing its greatness for the first time, so well was it shown. The Wildenstein Galleries, where the pictures were hung, are admirably suited to contemporary palettes, and the only handicap was, occasionally, a lack of sufficient space. The Juan Gris, for instance, a most handsome piece of decoration, simply cried aloud for that commodity.

The English of the Tri-National provided many minor pleasures but few great ones. The one Englishman who was talked of was Augustus John, whose dashing portrait sketch of Mr Tom Mix, of Movie fame, was much admired. It was considered fortunate that in his disturbed and disturbing visit to our shores he had found time to immortalize at least one of our reel celebrities. Mr Mix was

quite worthy of Mr John's brush and he and the artist met in a good moment. There are two other exceptionally good Augustus John portraits in the Carnegie International, so Mr John, who has his ups and downs in American favour, may here be considered in the ascendant. There was also a quietly painted study of a young man by Henry Lamb that astonished most because it was so different from the same artist's Lytton Strachey. This last portrait, all good Americans yearn to see, but I suppose we never will see it until we go to London some day and find it in the National Portrait Gallery.

The names I have been reciting, it will have been noticed, are the familiar names. With all this to-do of internationalism, the great artists do not arrive in hordes, and it is only with the truly great that the record is much concerned. The Italians really made a great effort to impress us but in the end it was only two of her older painters who stood out—Boldini and Mancini—and not even them can we consider monumental. There is apparently a great deal of striving in Italy, just as there is in America, and much of the striving has reached an intelligent plane, but intelligence is not the whole of genius. The only moving talent among them was that of the late Amedeo Modigliani, whose art, like Picasso's, so depended upon Paris that I always think of him as French. Wildt, the Italian sculptor, got into some of the newspapers with his grandiose bust of Mussolini whom he treated "in the grand style" with a fillet round his head and a general air of being half Emperor Hadrian, half Napoleon—but the discreet only smiled. Marinetti's protégés, the futurists, were entirely negligible. The authorities in charge of the exhibition quarantined them needlessly in a remote room thinking thus to safeguard the Italian Republic in case trouble should arise; but nobody bothered about them in the slightest degree.

HENRY McBRIDE

MUSICAL CHRONICLE

LES NOCES by Strawinsky strikes the middle way of feeling in our time. Signori lust and sentimentality, eccentric halves of disconnection, may find the music respectively saccharine and cold. The raucous strident note is out of it, and the ungirt facile unrestrained one out of it as well. Direct relation: sensation, emotion, and sentiment, will find the vibrance marvellously gratifying. So justly does the work convey the proportion of robustness and tenderness, impersonality and secret warmth shown by the clear moments of the day that one can have the illusion "this is it."

Strawinsky calls from the four pianos and the little battery a quality of sound simultaneously metallic, frosty, and dense. Bell tones permeate the instrumental medium, flat Kremlin chimes, clock-strokes, tzings of Chinese temple gongs: bell tones always bright, sharp, high up in air, quickly muffled and cut off as certain peals in Europe on special feasts. A scattering of cloudy pages helps relieve the brilliant robustiousness; and the movingly spaced series of clangorous chords and harmonic phrases struck at the end seem merely to gather and decisively hold the firm rich quality of white metals, nickel, silver, and steel, felt throughout the score.

Chorus and soli sound much as the voices in *Renard*, clamant, severe, half impersonal, bare of nuances, and with satisfying liturgical monotony. In section four, the ribald wedding festival, shouted tones of speech and falsetto singing thrust their dry and burlesque timbres into the broad rigid flow. The drunken rhythmic stuff, compulsive wild dance beats and cubic jerks and gestures are given by band and voices with an elegance Strawinsky has not equalled. *Les Noces* is powerful and transparently written, predominantly linear in its polyphony, solid with the telling counterpoint of the later Strawinsky, and cumulative in its effect. Dead spots do not break the brisk never precipitous movement of the four conjoined sections, each very slightly larger in volume than the last. The varying moods of barbaric gaiety and sadness and tenderness remain organic, and the vasty clock-strokes of the solemn conclusion round and resolve the well-sustained initial impulse.

None of Strawinsky's pieces, not even the *Symphonies for Wind Instruments*, is as classical and objective, or as radically placed out-

side the artist and alive in its own right. Here music exists, free of all descriptive intention and visual idea, primarily the expressive play of rigid lines and volumes. It is the action: whatever ballet may be superimposed must depend from it. The conception is human in scale, unlike the *Sacre's*, with its extraordinarily inhuman proportions and fearful feeling of an alien, excessive, and tigerish nature. *Les Noces* places us in a world relative and proportionate to man, before a portal not too vast for him, and adjusted to his size. These are the voices of the human being as the drive of sexual selection gives them themes: voices of virginal fear and painful manumission and majoration, ancestral promptings, orgiastic suggestions, tenderness from the untouched depths, and the heart of decision in which blind transmitted instinct gathers itself in a new thrust toward the unknown.

Perhaps the scope of *Le Sacre* is wider, the impulse tauter. *Les Noces* belongs with *Renard* and the *Symphonies*, the achievements of the later, more theoretically minded Strawinsky. None the less, no work of his has delivered the inward inborn form more completely, and approximated more closely the ideal of an "impersonal" vibrance he has set himself.

Prepared by Salzedo and directed by Stokowski, the performance of the music of *Les Noces* marked merely the climax of a crescendo of experience in the International Guild. True, spaghetti appeared even on the evening of *Les Noces*, incarnate in Casella's dreary concerto for string quartet; and at the previous concert, the second of the annual three, great coils of the cis-alpine delicacy were flung up and caught again by Respighi and lady in his orchestral song cycle, *Deità Silvane*. (Since the descant goes upon the misery of modern Italian music with the exception of Malipiero's, may it be permitted us to include Toscanini's name with Casella, Respighi and Company's. It leaves us very solitary in New York, the somnolence which overtook us at the Maestro's concerts. Universal rapture covers all. Toscanini was received in a Carnegie Hall festooned as in patriotic days with numberless flags. *En masse* the wealthy-bosomed audience arose, presenting arms. A flourish was sounded by the standing instrumentalists, and all the music he conducted was received as a superior, an ambassadorial, a quasi-angelic dispensation. The opinion of the million was upon the lips of the man who staggered hysterically up the main aisle after the performances of *Pini di Roma* repeating hoarsely "Respighi

has everything! Everything! Orchestration! And everything!" And the impressment with which Toscanini was received followed his departing figure. Yet us did Sleep the gentle brother conquer while he played. The last we remember saying the first evening was "Must Haydn be sounded always either forte or piano, and never with intermediary strength?" And on the second evening, after the opening pages of Beethoven's first symphony, it was "Aha, an unknown symphony by Donizetti" that we murmured as our eyes went shut. The vivacity was quite surface deep; the effects theatrical: witness the Siegfried dead-march dragged and coldly blared. The signal exception to the rule of Toscanini's performances occurred, in the presentation of the Vivaldi Concerto Grosso.)

Yet while Italian hours depressed the second concert of the International Guild, the incidental production of two living experiences, two native numbers, gave the organization a lift toward the good place on which the evening of *Les Noces* discovered it. The domesticities were Portals, a composition for string orchestra in twelve parts by Carl Ruggles, and the premier concert appearance of Florence Mills. Ruggles' new work, at least the single movement by which it was represented, differs radically from *Les Noces* in its approach. Like *Men and Mountains*, its predecessor, this music lies in the line of tradition, romantic in the twentieth century as it was classical in the nineteenth. Conception appears to have been accompanied by extra-musical impressions: witness the mystically descriptive title and the affixed lines of Walt Whitman's: "What are they of the known But to ascend and enter the Unknown?" The feeling is ecstatic, restless, passionate; the style an individual development through Schoenberg of the Tristanesque surge and aspiration. Ruggles very definitely belongs in the band of Schoenberg, Rudhyar, Webern, and the rest who find the climate of music only at the pitch of ecstasy.

The experience proves again that classicism and romanticism, and objectivity and subjectivity, when they are not empty formulae, merely constitute approaches to a quality of livingness which includes and transcends them all. A balance of the elements of sensibility related to Strawinsky's gives life to Ruggles' new music, too. Energy and severity inform the movement of the strings; the raucous strident attack, and the languid and easy one are both out of it. That surging aching interweaving violin music, thrust out as by some storm of feeling and rising in steep tumultuous

waves, never touches one with the hysterical personal disagreeable touch, remains always reserved and robust. True, it proceeds with great warmth and vibrancy of sound; Ruggles' polyphony has a tapestry-like richness. He will tell you he never doubles the same note in the harmony, never repeats the same note nor its octave in the melody, not even in the inner parts, until after the passage of at least seven to nine different notes. The coda with its thrilling sequence of single tones left to vibrate and die away possesses mystical seduction. But who shall declare this vein of nostalgic, lyrical, passionate music less legitimate than Strawinsky's differently vibrating one, relatively less powerfully developed though Ruggles' gift may be? The feeling of to-day is satisfied by both. There is no conflict. Through different mediums and manners of exploitations, both men have registered the intense groping movement of contemporary life toward integration and a proper form.

The good Lord knows the quality of Florence Mills' singing is remote and Hydaspian equally from frost and metal and grave ecstatic surges. And from every other sort of singing quite as well. There cannot have been another voice exquisite exactly like hers. Oh yes, larger, stronger, richer, mellower, what you will. This one is tiny and delicate. But never another voice with the infinitely relaxed, impersonal, bird-like quality of hers. They would have written about it had there been. A pure instrument, this; sensuous, but not a human voice at all. In Noah's ark they said such and such a one sang like a bird, and the simile has been revived from time to time; but has the application ever once been nearer? Here is the very thing, sitting up on a little branch in springtime, tenderest pattern of effortlessness. Possibly the view of two slender legs like lily-stalks during the singing helped the bird suggestion with the feeling of fragile, hollow bones. The picture required little association when she crooned, high up in her head, to the music William Grant Still has written for her: "De sun hit smile s'on high On de ribber flowin' by." All untouched nature was there, cradling itself, relaxed as a child; nature as it remains in the few blacks and the fewer whites who do not as yet wish to be any one else or any other way. And between this expression and Ruggles', no conflict, either. Why is it eternally so difficult to remember that It comes wearing a thousand thousand aspects, that it can have as many forms as there are faces, and that no two contend?

PAUL ROSENFELD

COMMENT

Quicquid loquemur, ubicunque, sit pro sua scilicet portione perfectum.

QUINTILIAN

TO exclude the speciously attractive, is difficult. The ideal director of a "zoo," we are told by Mr William T. Hornaday, must at this time when tempted to "take on" mammals, birds, and reptiles, be a master in the art of refusing. The avowed artist must also, unless we are to have fads rather than individuality, be an artist in refusing. In each phase of art, interrelated influences of technique are apparent. The writer, however, seems in certain respects, either more pridelessly or more recklessly than others, susceptible to current cleverness. Much as the victim of the fashionable *coutourier* participates in successive epidemics of cut and colour—of shutter green, serpent blue, or Venetian fuchsia—or of the wet seal *coiffure* or the powdered wig, the sciolist subscribes to the tyranny of timeliness, of delightful dubiety, of what is acute or effective. Imagism, the *hokku*, the coon song, the story true-because-I-have-lived-it, a morality of immorality, significantly concocted equine unselfconsciousness, these several modes have found prompt adherents.

There cannot be too much excellence. Wilhelm Meister, Phineas Phinn, The Golden Bowl, The Lost Girl, Dubliners, Esther Waters, we may admire, and the shock of admiration may serve us as an incentive to writing, quite as may that which has been experienced by us; but like the impelling emotion of actual experience, literary excitement must be assimilated before it can be reproduced. Experiences recorded verbatim are not fiction and verbiage is not eloquence. Much may be learned by consciously noting the merits of other writers. Apperception is, however, quite different from a speedy exchange of one's individuality for that of another. There is a certain briskness of execution which reminds one of the mediaeval undisciplined disputant who "like the fighting-cock, was armed with a redoubtable 'therefore'": (*ergot, spur*).

Among rules recommended by Robert of Sorbon to the scholar who desired to make progress in his studies, were a summarizing of what had been read, a fixing of the attention upon it, and a con-

ferring with fellow pupils. This counsel to precision and this permission to discussion, were signally if unconsciously exemplified by Doctor Johnson, whose life by Boswell presents itself to us just now, simultaneously in two editions—in two volumes, with notes by Roger Ingpen;¹ and again, in three volumes with notes by Arnold Glover and introduction by Austin Dobson, in the Dent, Dutton edition.² Based upon the sixth edition somewhat dutiful in appearance and heavy in the hand, the three Dutton volumes give us six prefaces and the dedication, a facsimile of the original title page, the Boswell foot-notes and notes by the editor, the "chronological catalogue of the prose works of Samuel Johnson," and an index. With decorous animation, Mr Dobson tells of the houses in which Doctor Johnson lived and of places where he dined. One delights to be reminded of The Crown and Anchor, Apollo Chamber, The Pine Apple in New Street, likes to be told of Doctor Johnson's patronizing The Turk's Head because it "had not much business," and to reread the testimony of Ozias Humphrey, the miniature painter, that Doctor Johnson was "so sententious and so knowing" that it was "impossible to argue with him," that "when he began to talk, everything was 'as correct as a *second edition.*'"

A fondness for compactness and severity of format, tempts one to wish to keep one's Oxford Boswell; but in honesty one admits that it is possible for this most self-sufficient narrative to be enhanced by portraits and drawings. To commend a work of art by saying that one is unaware of it, is doubtful praise, but the typographic—perhaps calligraphic—minute severity of the sketches by Herbert Railton, renders them a species of printers' flowers, affixed but not intruded.

Boswell's folly is in its egregious indocility, classic; nevertheless it is as Sir Edmund Gosse observes, through Boswell, that "a great leader of intellectual society was able after his death to carry on unabated, and even heightened, the tyrannous ascendancy of his living mind." Boswell allows "his hero to paint his own portrait." He is indeed the artist, demonstrating as he does, "that in no writings whatever can be found more *bark and steel for the mind*" than in those of Doctor Johnson, and

¹ Boswell's Life of Johnson. Edited, with notes, by Roger Ingpen. Two volumes. G. Baytun. Bath. 36/-.

² Boswell's Life of Johnson. Edited, with notes, by Austin Dobson. Illustrated. 10mo. Three volumes. E. P. Dutton and Company. \$10.

aware of his vanity, one is deeply affected by his irrelevantly modest request to posterity: "If this work should at any future period be reprinted, I hope that care will be taken of my orthography." The relation between Boswell and Doctor Johnson "must sometimes be admitted even by friends," says Professor Saintsbury, "as that of bear and monkey, a contrast diverting and effective, but almost too violent for the best art." Nevertheless, he says also, of Boswell: "He is often actually on the scene: he is constantly speaking in his own person; and yet we never think of him as the man with the pointing-stick at the panorama, as the beadle at the function, as the ring-master of the show. He seems to stand rather in the relation of the epic poet to his characters, narrating, omnipresent, but never in the way. No other biographer, I repeat, seems to me to have reached quite this pitch of art."

In this age of curiosity, of excusiveness and discursiveness, one is impelled by the thoroughness even more than by the virtuosity of Doctor Johnson. One may say of him as he said of Sir Thomas Browne, that he "used exotick words which if rejected, must be supplied by circumlocution; . . . in defense of his uncommon words and expressions, we must consider that he had uncommon sentiments." "I'll mind my own business," said Doctor Johnson, and accuracy was apparently part of that business. He felt, says Boswell, that if accuracy is to be habitual, one must never suffer any careless expression to escape one or attempt to deliver thoughts without arranging them in the clearest manner. In alluding to "a certain female friend's 'laxity of narration, and inattention to truth,' 'I am as much vexed (said he) at the ease with which she hears it mentioned to her, as at the thing itself.'" Gracefully to enlarge upon slight and untested premises is a temptation, for scarcely any one loves toil for its own sake. Diligent though not inclined to diligence, Doctor Johnson is the author of what one may justifiably term "works." In his writings we have so competent a grasp of what was to be said, that we have the effect of italics without the use of them. There is also an abundant naturalness, and a simplicity which like that of Abraham Lincoln, was not ashamed to be vulnerable to distress. "Beauchler had such a propensity to satire," says Boswell, "that at one time Johnson said to him, 'You never open your mouth but with intention to give

pain; and you have often given me pain, not from the power of what you said, but from seeing your intention.’” Doctor Johnson’s prodigiousness, vociferousness, and fighting form are made much of. His dialectic has sometimes the aspect of a bout at quarter-staff, but is also, vibrant with sensibility, and one cannot dismiss from one’s mind the boldness and the humility of those unselfdefensive words to Thomas Warton: “You will be pleased to make my compliments to all my friends; and be so kind, at every idle hour, as to remember, dear Sir, Yours,” and “I have a great mind to come to Oxford at Easter; but you will not invite me. Shall I come uninvited, or stay here where nobody perhaps would miss me if I went? A hard choice! But such is the world to, dear Sir, Yours,—Consciousness of lack or of disappointment is an odd part of self-sufficiency and an unselfconscious attributing of value to the minute is seen in the statement: “Nothing is little to him that feels it with great simplicity; a mind able to see common incidents in their real state is disposed by very common incidents to very serious contemplations.” Confident and businesslike, his “gorgeous declamation” is sometimes “splendid,” never showy. “I think,” he says, “there is some reason for questioning whether the body and mind are not so proportioned, that the one can bear all which can be inflicted on the other; whether virtue cannot stand its ground as long as life, and whether a soul well principled will not be sooner separated than subdued.” In its remoteness from fashion, the style of this passage recalls Sir Thomas Browne. And in “the uniform vivid texture” of other of his prose, surely it is not a mistake to perceive that “subtlety of disquisition and strength of language” which he found in the author of *The Religio*.

One cannot perhaps be an “unofficial head of English literature,” but one may be an apprentice, inferring much from the analytical thinking and “spoken essays” of one who *was*, of one who remarked in speaking of Dryden: “He who excels has a right to teach, and he whose judgement is incontestable, may without usurpation, examine and decide.” Waiving as one may, certain of Doctor Johnson’s “judgements,” one can ill afford to disregard his example. That is to say, one may if one will, avoid faults of negligence; one need not—if one has read and thought—be on the watch for novelty; one may be “lofty without exaggeration”; “the force of one’s disapproval may go into personal affirmation.”

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